■ ACROSS/A18

2 elderly men watching Pacquiao do 'Battle' die of heart attack

■ NEWS/A7

Davide appointed presidential adviser on electoral reforms

■ NEWS/A2

Pilot steers plane away from populated area, dies in crash

■ METRO/A21

Police rescue Indian from kidnap gang; 1 suspect killed, 3 others arrested

Psychic sees GMA finishing term if she survives '666'

BAKA DI SILA MAKATULOG HANGGANG HUNYO!

By Leila B. Salaverria

IT MAY BE THE CHINESE Year of the Dog, man's best friend, but a Filipino psychic says 2006 belongs to the devil and is marked by betrayal.

One of the most promi-

PSYCHIC/A10

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS V

Wednesday, January 25, 2006 ★★ 6 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 48

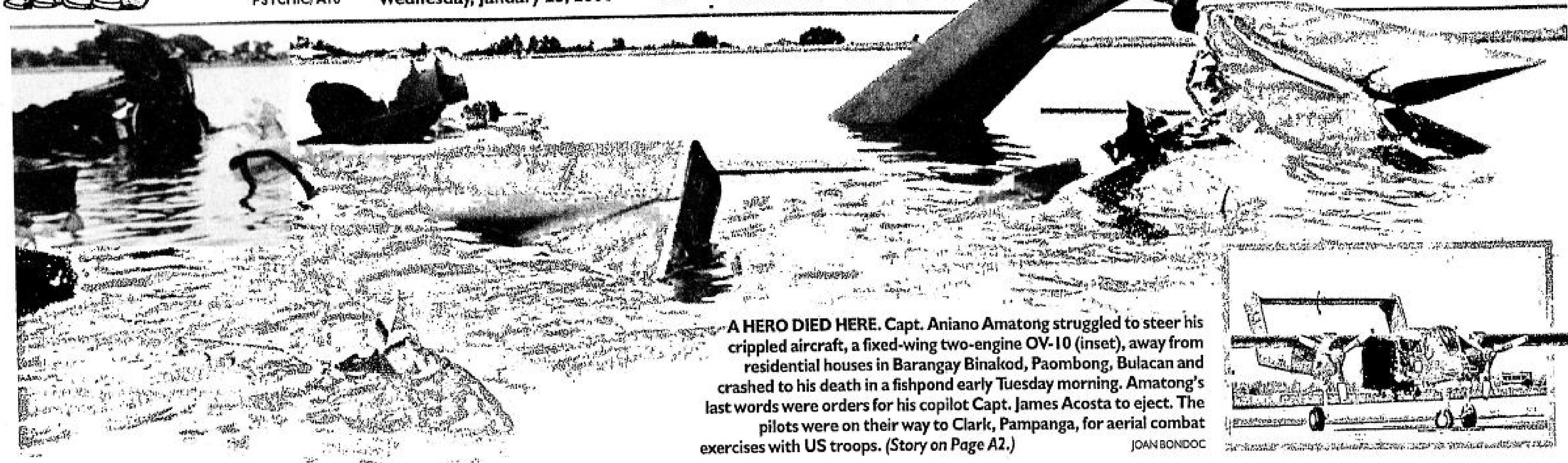
Pacquiao hot on ebay from his jackets to posters

By Frank Cimatu
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

VIGAN CITY—FILIPINO BOXING HERO MANNY Pacquiao is hot.

In fact, the excitement that Pacquiao generated from stopping Mexican fighter Erik Morales on Sunday has spilled over to ebay, the online American auction store.

PACQUIAO/A4



A HERO DIED HERE. Capt. Aniano Amatong struggled to steer his crippled aircraft, a fixed-wing two-engine OV-10 (inset), away from residential houses in Barangay Binakod, Paombong, Bulacan and crashed to his death in a fishpond early Tuesday morning. Amatong's last words were orders for his copilot Capt. James Acosta to eject. The pilots were on their way to Clark, Pampanga, for aerial combat exercises with US troops. *(Story on Page A2.)* JOAN BONDOC

Council scraps 'No-El'

GMA forms commission to rally support for changes in Charter

By Christine O. Avendaño

AT THE MEETING OF the Council of State boycotted by the opposition, supporters of President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday agreed to proceed with elections next year while moving to adopt the parliamentary system of government.

The majority of the council participants, including former President Fidel V. Ramos, expressed the need to go ahead with the 2007 election for local governments, congressmen and half of the 24-member Senate.

"The ratio of those who talked is 4:1 more or less, four being in favor of just maintaining the system and holding of the elections," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said.

Briefing reporters later, Ms Arroyo announced the appointment of newly retired Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. as presidential adviser on electoral reforms to clean up the corruption-tainted Commission on Elections *(See story on Page 7)*.

Ms Arroyo announced the council had agreed to form a Charter change advocacy commission that would launch a P5-million information campaign on the moves to amend the 1987 Constitution.

COUNCIL/A20

THE BIG 3: Even before Charter change and other hotly debated related issues, prayer tops the agenda of the Council of State meeting on Tuesday at the Palace. President Arroyo flanked by Vice President Noli de Castro and former President Ramos creates a 15- member Charter change advocacy commission. In his opening remarks De Castro urges the council to heed Pacquiao's victory wish for Filipinos to be united. Ramos says a no-election scenario is a disaster waiting to happen. LYN RILLON

Gov't eyes sale of more Marcos loot for CARP

By Blanche S. Rivera

AFTER USING UP NEARLY ALL OF THE P35 billion in Swiss bank deposits in just two years, the Arroyo administration is eyeing the sale of other ill-gotten assets of the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos worth P46 billion, including a block of PLDT shares valued at P21 billion, to fund the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) and Land Bank of the Philippines will also intensify their collection of land amortization payments from farmer beneficiaries of the CARP to raise an additional P40 billion, Agrarian Reform Undersecretary Jeffrey Galan said yesterday.

Galan said there was greater pressure on the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) to dispose of the Marcos assets such as real estate, sequestered media networks and shares of stock to support the government's land distribution program.

"The PCGG should match its disposition

GOV'T/A4

COMING HOME

Streets a window to Filipino soul

By Fernando del Mundo

(Last of 3 parts)

FOR ALL THEIR INGENUITY, FILIPINOS HAVE yet to come up with the proper tar formula. Asphalt roads melt under a rain.

The tarmac highways in Rwanda in the Great Lakes region of Central Africa were sturdier. They were laid on by the late President Juvenal Habyarimana at around the outset of Ferdinand Marcos's martial law rule in 1972.

They had remained a sight to behold in the misty Land of a Thousand Hills until 1994 when Habyarimana was killed in a mysterious plane crash that ignited the genocide of 800,000 minority Tutsis by machete-wielding Hutus. Under incessant pounding by 10-wheeler trucks delivering urgently needed humanitarian aid to displaced Rwandans, the roads began to crumble.

If highways could be built to endure in one of the world's poorest countries, there's no reason why it could not be done here.

The Pan Philippine Highway that Marcos built did not last very long, at least those stretches I traveled before I left in the early 1990s.

Traffic in the capital is bad, but it's not as messed up as in Tehran or Cairo.

STREETS/A20

AFP: Junior officers being recruited for coup

By Dona Pazzibugan

AFTER CONFIRMING ON MONDAY THE existence of a threat against President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration, the Armed Forces yesterday revealed that junior officers were being recruited for a coup d'etat.

Military spokesperson Col. Tristan Kison also said the AFP leadership was convinced that an "orchestrated" plot to unseat Ms Arroyo was in motion because of successive events that transpired last week.

Kison said military commanders got wind of the recruitment activity sometime around Jan. 19.

He claimed that the recruitment was discovered in "some areas in the Visayas and in Mindanao," but that the activity had not reached Luzon and the capital.

"Toward the end of last week," military commanders reported "a recruitment among junior officers in the field for what could be a coup d'etat," Kison said.

"They were alarmed," he added.

But Kison said the AFP had yet to pinpoint those behind the alleged coup plot: "Our commanders have not positively identified them."

AFP/A10

2 Pinays have lock on wrestler's heart

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

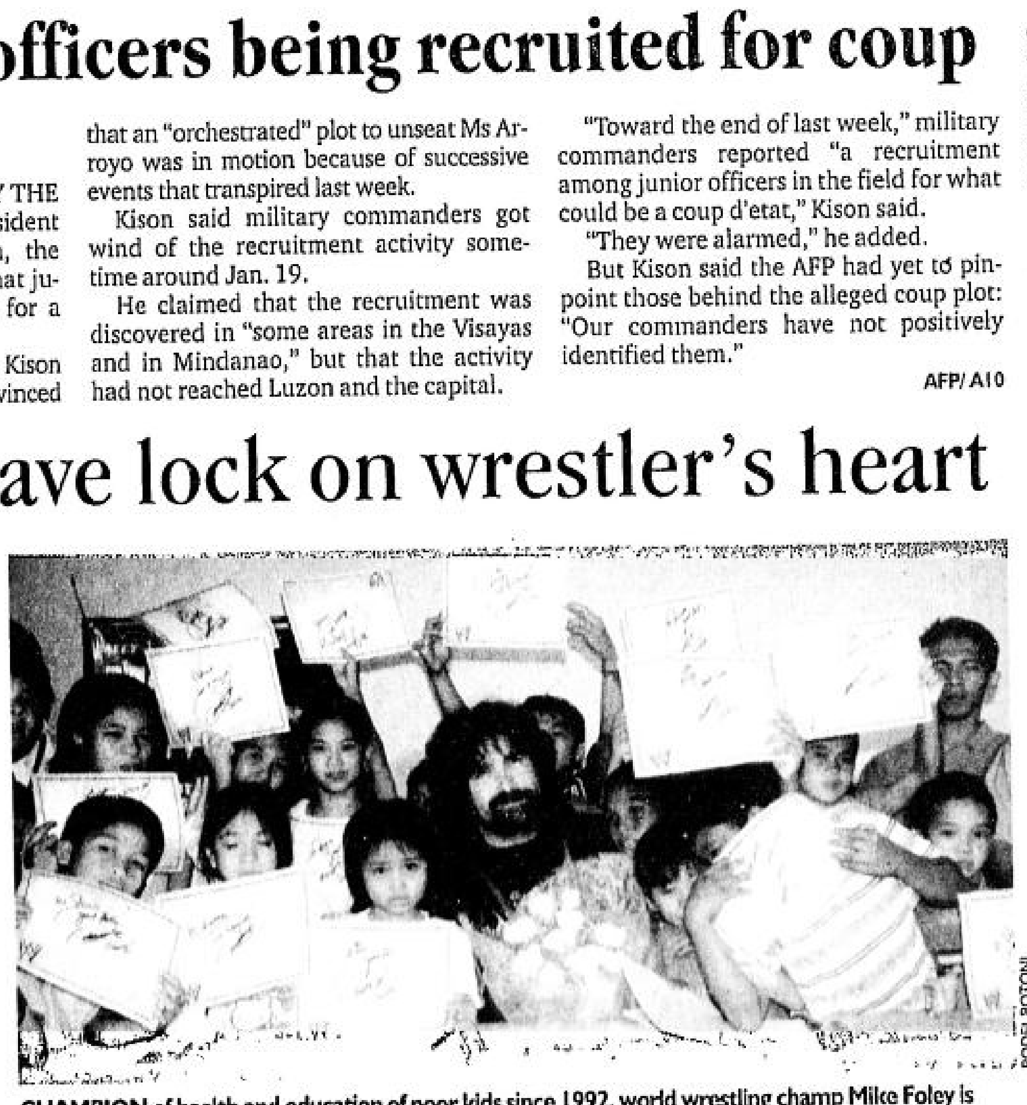
DO NOT JUDGE THIS BOOK BY its menacing cover.

Underneath the scraggly hair and the 280 pounds packed in a lumbering 6-foot-2 frame, champion wrestler Mick Foley has a soft spot for the Philippines.

Foley, a three-time World Wrestling Entertainment champion and three-time tag team champion with The Rock, told the INQUIRER in an interview at Gateway Mall over the weekend that it was a little girl from the Philippines who inspired him to be a better person.

Actually, she was the second

2 PINAYS/A20



RODEL ROTONI

CHAMPION of health and education of poor kids since 1992, world wrestling champ Mike Foley is featured in the World Wrestling Entertainment Raw Live Tour on Feb. 24-25 at the Araneta Coliseum.

President to appoint 54 generals

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

LOYALTY TO THE CONSTITUTION and the Commander in Chief will be the deciding factors when President Macapagal-Arroyo chooses the successors to the military brass due to retire in the next 12 months, Malacañang said yesterday.

The large-scale retirement is expected to further strengthen Ms Arroyo's grip on the Armed Forces, deemed crucial at this time of persistent coup rumors and questionable military loyalty.

According to Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, "the President cannot afford to have some of her generals, especially those

PRESIDENT/A10

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Luzon and Northern Visayas will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers becoming widespread over Southern Luzon including Aurora province which may trigger flash floods and landslides. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.

COMPILED BY: JAMIE ALARCON, PDI RESEARCH/01/25/06 SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

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Second FRONT PAGE

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Misuari granted medical leave

By Tarra V. Quismundo and Armand N. Nocum

JAILED MORO REBEL LEADER NUR MISUARI would soon be out of detention for a health check, as a Makati court yesterday granted him a medical furlough.

Setting conditions for the temporary release, Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 138 Judge Sixto Marella Jr. yesterday allowed Misuari and fellow accused Ustadz Abuharis Usman to undergo medical treatment.

"... The court finds the accused Misuari to have presented sufficient basis for the court to favorably consider his motion. As for accused Usman... considering his late age, length of incarceration, and the expected long period of trial because of the number of witnesses, for humanitarian reasons the court will likewise favorably consider his motion," said Marella's order issued yesterday.

Now 65, Misuari, former governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), and his spiritual adviser, 68-year-old Usman, have been detained for four years in a special prison facility in Fort Sto. Domingo, Sta. Rosa City, Laguna for charges of rebellion.

The charges were lodged against them for their alleged role in a bloody uprising that killed some 100 people in Jolo in 2001.

On Jan. 10, they were given six hours of liberty to take part in the celebration of the Muslim holiday, Eid'l Adha, in Taguig City.

Misuari and Usman had sought a five-day medical furlough for a check-up at the St. Luke's Hospital citing complaints of frequent abdominal pains and worrisome blood pressure readings.

In his five-page order, Marella ordered Arthur Lim, counsel for both accused, to submit within 10 days requirements that would "enable the court to issue the corresponding implementing order and designate the officer who will oversee the execution thereof."

The court asked Lim to detail the nature of the examination the two would undergo, the name and location of the hospital, the length of time they would be away, and the names and addresses of physicians who would conduct the checkup.

Misuari and Usman strengthened their motion by submitting to court a letter Lim received last November from Task Force Sunriser, PNP's over-all security for Misuari.

In the letter, Misuari's custodians recommended that he be taken to the St. Luke's Hospital in Quezon City, the Asian Hospital in Muntinlupa, or any tertiary hospital as a routine PNP medical examination showed that Misuari suffered "essential hypertension and acute respiratory tract infection."

The letter cited that the custodians "could not move" Misuari without a court order. It also came with a guarantee that the Philippine National Police Special Action Force, in coordination with the PNP Intelligence Group and the National Capital Region Police Office, would provide security for the accused once allowed to undergo medical examination outside their detention facility.

Manila's chief peace negotiator Jesus Dureza said yesterday the government had no objections to Misuari's release.

"I welcome any humanitarian gesture extended to chairman Nur if his plea for medical treatment due to his physical condition meets the favorable consideration of the court," Dureza said.

The Department of Justice also dropped its opposition to Misuari's bid for a medical furlough.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said the head of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) deserved a medical furlough for humanitarian reasons. "He was only asking for a four-day furlough, I think it would be inhuman to refuse that under proper escorts," he said.

Gonzalez made the statement after Misuari agreed to order his men not to harm American troops when they visit Mindanao next month from Feb. 6 to March 6 for the annual Balikatan military exercises.

With AFP

'EJECT! EJECT!'

AFP pilot dies a hero as plane goes down

By Tonette Orejas
and Carmela Reyes,
PDI Central Luzon Desk

PAOMBONG, BULACAN — UP to the last moment, Capt. Aniano Amatong struggled to steer his crippled OV-10 fighter away from the houses on the ground; he also ordered his co-pilot Capt. James Acosta to "Eject! Eject!"

In seconds, the fixed-wing two-engine plane crashed in a fishpond in Barangay Binakod here, killing Amatong. Acosta parachuted to safety nearby.

Lt. Col. Restituto Padilla Jr., Philippine Air Force spokesperson, called Amatong's final act "heroism of the highest order."

He quoted Acosta as saying that Amatong had opted to remain in the aircraft to avoid a bigger casualty count.

Amatong, 31, was found dead outside the wreckage of the plane, his parachute deployed, indicating he may have tried to eject at the last minute.

"As a pilot, he deserves to get the Distinguished Aviation Cross," Padilla said.

He said Amatong, a member of Class '96 of the Philippine Military Academy, will get a hero's burial.

Amatong and Acosta took off from an air base in Sangley, Cavite, just before 9 a.m. but went down 15 minutes later midway to Clark Field in Pampanga where they were to join aerial combat maneuvers with US troops, Padilla said.

Villagers reported seeing one of the engines emitting smoke before the aircraft plunged then exploded in the fishpond, Paombong police chief Rene Casis told The Associated Press by telephone from the crash site.

In a television interview, Padilla said Acosta had confirmed the plane's left engine had developed trouble.

Mayor Donato Marcos said local residents heard explosions before the plane crashed.

Arnaldo Cruz, a Binakod resident, said Acosta warned residents not to get close to the wreckage because the plane had been carrying a bomb.

The AFP has about a dozen OV-10s, which are used mainly in Mindanao, where government troops are battling communist and Muslim guerrillas.

Air Force chief Lt. Gen. Jose L. Reyes ordered the entire OV-10 fleet grounded after the accident.

SURVIVOR: Capt. James Acosta, co-pilot of the ill-fated Air Force plane, is airlifted to Villamor Air Base. He survived the crash after he ejected just in time.

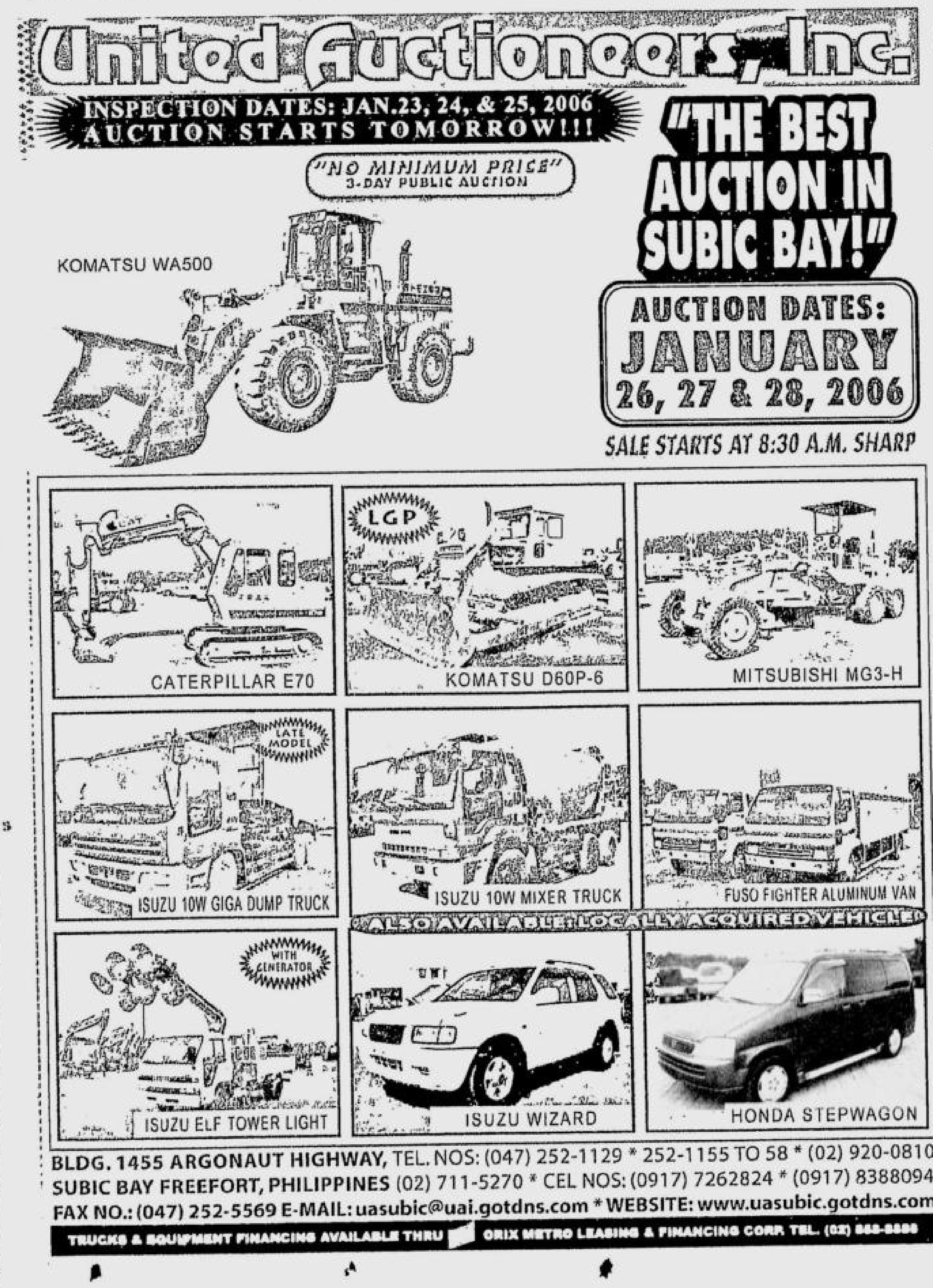
PAF PHOTO

IN THE KNOW

THE OV-10 BRONCO IS A LIGHT ATTACK AND cargo aircraft acquired by the US Marines in the 1960s for visual investigations. The Bronco can be used for short take-offs and landings, helicopter escort, armed exploration, gunfire spotting and even low-level aerial photography. Its rear fuselage compartment can carry 3,200 pounds of cargo and five combat-equipped troops.

While the US military has stopped using the OV-10, other countries like the Philippines, Colombia, Indonesia and Venezuela continue to fly Broncos. In September 2003, the Philippine Air Force accepted eight OV-10 Bronco planes from Thailand. These were used mainly for reconnaissance flights and bombing runs to support ground troops fighting with Muslim separatists and communist guerrillas in Mindanao.

Cyril L. Bonabente, PDI Research



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SUBIC RAPE CASE

Palace can't just abrogate VFA; usec explains why

By Volt Contreras
and Christian V. Esguerra

IN A SIGN THAT MALACAÑANG may be cool to the congressional initiative to junk the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement, a Palace official yesterday warned the country could lose up to $8 million a year in military and humanitarian benefits if the 1998 accord were scrapped.

"We benefit yearly – from $7 million to $8 million – from all the different exercises we have with American military forces," said Undersecretary Zosimo Paredes, executive director of the Presidential Commission on the VFA (VFACom).

The annual "Balance Piston" exercises, for example, not only train Filipino troops but also provide for "logistics reimbursement (from the US) in favor of the Armed Forces of the Philippines" of around P1.6 million for ammunition and fuel used, he said.

"So we would be losing this should these exercises be stopped on account of the scrapping of the VFA," Paredes said at a press conference he called at the Department of Foreign Affairs where the VFACom holds office.

The commission, which monitors the implementation of the VFA, is headed by both the foreign and defense secretaries as co-chairs.

7-year-old pact

Last week, the Legislative Oversight Committee on the VFA (Lovfa), composed of members of Congress, voted to recommend to the President the renegotiation of the 7-year-old pact after the US government refused to hand over to Philippine authorities the four US Marines accused of raping a Filipino woman at the Subic Freeport last November.

The US Embassy in Manila turned down the Philippine request for custody, citing a provision in the VFA allowing the US to keep accused servicemen in its care.

The Lovfa adopted the resolution filed by Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago seeking to amend that provision and grant custody of accused US personnel to the Philippines.

Paredes said he disagreed with the tack taken by Lovfa – which is to call for the abrogation of the pact and then renegotiate it – adding: "They should have instead extended their desire [to the Americans] to amend or make better the provisions of the VFA, rather than telling them 'we will abrogate and then lets talk.'"

"It's not the way to negotiate between and among countries that have had long-standing amity between them," he said.

The country's religious, meanwhile, are not giving up on the bid for Philippine custody of the four Marines.

The Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines (AMRSP) yesterday asked the US Embassy to surrender Staff Sgt. Chad Brian Carpentier and Lance Corporals Daniel Smith, Keith Silkwood and Dominic Duplantis to Philippine authorities.

'Sense of fairness and justice'

"We appeal to the sense of fairness and justice of the US Embassy to facilitate the effective exercise of legal processes of the Philippine judicial system to give justice to the victim by surrendering the accused to be put on trial in its courts," the group said in a statement.

The AMRSP represents more than 300 congregations such as the Franciscans, Jesuits, Dominicans, Benedictines, Augustinians and Lasallian Brothers.

The AMRSP said the rape case "strengthens our conviction that the (VFA) should be abrogated by the Philippine government."

"It not only occasions similar abuses and violation of human rights, but also casts a shadow on our sovereignty as a nation," it said.

To show their support for the rape victim, the religious groups designated Feb. 6, the feast day of St. Agatha, a martyr, as a "day of fasting and prayer for this intention and the intentions of all victims of sexual violence."

"To her mother's appeal for prayers, we offer those of our communities throughout the Philippines not only for the success of their legal endeavors but for her healing and consolation," they said.

Fraport sale of Piatco stake to Yap's Manila Hotel in peril

FRANKFURT AIRPORT OPERATOR Fraport's deal to sell its stake in the operator of Manila airport's third terminal to Manila Hotel for $200 million has still not been concluded and will probably collapse, a source familiar with the matter said.

"It seems very likely that the negotiations will fail," the source told Reuters yesterday.

Fraport sought World Bank arbitration to settle a dispute over compensation for the terminal after it was seized by the Philippine government in December 2004. The government had rejected Fraport's request for $425 million in compensation.

But Fraport said on Aug. 26 it had accepted Manila Hotel's offer for its stake in the Philippine International Air Terminal Co. Inc (PIATCO) consortium and that it would receive an initial sum of $50 million once it signed the deal, followed by the remaining $150 million within six months of signing.

The Supreme Court had voided the contract between the government and Piatco, saying amendments to the contract were illegal.

Fraport finance chief Stefan Schulte told Reuters in November that the deal had been delayed and could yet fail.

A Fraport spokesman said on Tuesday that Fraport was still in talks about selling its stake to Manila Hotel, owned by Emilio Yap.

"The negotiations are highly complex and difficult," the spokesman said.

He added that Fraport was also continuing to pursue the case with the World Bank and that the company was optimistic about the result. *Reuters.*

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Gov't eyes sale of more Marcos loot for CARP

From page A1

program with the CARP deadline," he said in an interview yesterday.

The DAR expressed confidence that the recent Supreme Court ruling declaring as ill-gotten 111,415 shares in Philippine Telecommunications Investment Corp. (PTIC) would beef up the CARP's possible fund source by at least P20 billion.

The PTIC is the largest stockholder in the country's biggest telecommunications firm, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT), with a 28 percent stake. The ill-gotten shares, constituting 6.4 percent of PLDT, are said to be worth P21 billion.

"That has not been programmed yet by the PCGG, but we can assume that it will also go to CARP once the decision is final," Galan said. This would bring the total disposable assets with the PCGG to P46 billion, not just P25 billion as projected.

Under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law of 1998, all funds recovered from the Marcoses and their cronies should be used for land reform.

Excluding the P8 billion set aside to indemnify the human rights victims of the Marcos regime, only P5 billion is left of the Swiss deposits, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) said at a budget hearing in the Senate the other day.

On orders of the Swiss Federal Supreme Court, the Swiss deposits, amounting to $356 million in 1990, were transferred to a Philippine National Bank escrow account in 1998. Despite the Marcos family's motions for reconsideration, the Supreme Court in 2003 ruled to forfeit the money in favor of the government.

The remaining P5 billion will be used by CARP this year. "(It's) practically gone," Nora C. Oliveros, a director at the DBM, told Senate President Franklin Drilon.

Two years vs 2 decades

Drilon had ordered the DBM to explain how and why the Marcos funds were used, including P4.9 billion that was released right before the May 2004 elections. He speculated that part of the money went to the P728-million fertilizer fund that allegedly financed Ms Arroyo's election campaign.

In the House of Representatives, Deputy Minority Leader Satur C. Ocampo said yesterday that President Macapagal-Arroyo should be held accountable for what he called the misuse of the ill-gotten wealth recovered from the Marcoses.

"What the budget department now admits is that Ms Arroyo only took a couple of years to apparently misspend almost all of what Marcos painstakingly and secretly stashed for two decades," Ocampo said in a statement.

Quoting documents gathered by Bayan Muna, the party-list lawmaker said there were "clear indications that Ms Arroyo approved the use of the recovered Marcos [funds] not directly related to land distribution like personnel expenses of the agrarian reform department."

Ocampo said "a huge chunk" of the P27 billion was "spent immediately before the fraudulent 2004 elections."

He said that as chair of the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council (PARC), the highest governing body on agrarian reform, Ms Arroyo approved the questionable use of the Marcos funds by so-called "CARP-implementing" agencies like the agriculture, trade and industry, and labor departments.

Show list of beneficiaries

The Bayan Muna representative noted that "hundreds of millions of pesos" remained unaccounted for because of this irregularity. "They cannot even show a list of CARP beneficiaries," he said.

Representatives Roseller Barinaga (NPC, Zamboanga del Norte) and Joel Mayo Almario (Lakas, Davao Oriental) are also seeking an accounting of the Marcos funds.

Barinaga, chair of the committee on labor and employment, said the public had every right to know how the funds were spent because these formed part of the public funds plundered by the Marcos regime.

Pending the full accounting, Barinaga urged everyone to suspend judgment on the CARP funds.

Outside Congress, the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, a militant farmers group, called on the DAR to publicize how the land was actually distributed to farmers to justify how the bulk of the P35 billion in Marcos wealth was spent.

"Show us, the farmers and the public, where the money really went. That money was stolen once by Marcos, and now it has been stolen again," Willy Marbella, KMP internal deputy secretary general, said.

The PARC maintained that the government had spent the Swiss deposits on CARP alone and that it could explain the disbursements of the fund.

PARC finance director Aurita Carlos said the P4.9 billion released by the DBM was used for activities of other CARP-implementing agencies for land reform.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources, for example, used the money for surveying public lands while the Land Registration Authority used it for titling, according to Carlos.

GMA rice program

The DAR and Department of Agriculture had signed a memorandum on the use of P544 million under the Ginintuang Masaganang Ani (GMA) rice program.

Carlos said only P494 million of the P544 million actually went to the DA for the procurement of seeds and farm inputs, while P50 million was left with DAR for its farm-to-market road projects.

"We have a list of all the projects," he said. "We can explain everything."

Galan said some groups often mistake the P544 million for the fertilizer fund but this was actually for seedlings that benefited agrarian reform beneficiaries, and therefore fell under the CARP as support service.

In a briefing paper released yesterday, the PARC said Congress approved the use of the agrarian reform fund during budget hearings with the DAR every year, including the use of the Marcos wealth to pay the salaries of CARP personnel in various agencies.

"The annual budget requirement for CARP has always been subject to the approval of Congress ... Why are they questioning it now? They should know this," Carlos said.

The DAR said the actual cash from the Swiss deposits remaining with the National Treasury was still P10 billion, representing the P5 billion left for this year and another P5 billion which was programmed for CARP last year but for which the DBM has not yet issued notices of cash allocation.

Ortigas lot, TV stations

With the Swiss deposits running out, the government has identified other sources of funds.

The PCGG committed to remit P14.2 billion to the agrarian reform fund this year, banking on the sale of real property such as a lot on Ortigas Avenue corner Berkeley Street near the PCGG office, the "Payanig sa Pasig" lot, the Banaue Inn in Baguio, lots in Caloocan, Iligan, Naga and Legazpi cities, and the Piedras Petroleum property in Bataan.

The PCGG also has to privatize sequestered TV stations IBC 13 and RPN 9, and sell its shares in Meralco and other firms. The PCGG tried but failed to dispose of these assets last year.

"The problem is that there is always a failure in bidding. It's not the PCGG's fault, it's just that the government has procedures that have to be followed," Galan said.

Beneficiaries' debts

Galan said another option to fund CARP was to increase the collection rate among some 4.2 million farmer beneficiaries, who still owe the government some P40 billion in unpaid land amortizations.

He said the government was receiving only about 17 percent of the annual collectibles from farmers because it was hard to identify and reach the beneficiaries, especially those covered by collective certificate of land ownership awards.

"The problem is that we are very lax with them. The farmers can choose not to pay if they have a bad farming season, or if disasters hit their area, and they produce nothing," Galan said. *With reports from Michael Lim Ubac and Alcuin Papa*

Searching for the American Dream?

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Pacquiao hot . . .

From page A1

"Pacquiao items"—from autographed posters to boxing gloves to lighters to action figures—have been offered for sale.

The hottest item on the online auction block is the official "Team Pacquiao" jacket, which has been bid on nine times since Jan. 23, a day after Pacquiao floored Morales.

Originally selling for $50, the jacket is now worth $152.50.

Jacket

An ebay member from the Philippines, identified as "blazer1024," is selling the white and red jacket bearing the logos of Pacquiao's corporate sponsors.

Another hot item is a pair of Everlast gloves autographed by Pacquiao. It sells for $174.99.

Another pair of boxing gloves with autographs of both Pacquiao and Morales has been sold for $127.50. The bidding started at $124.99.

An autographed 12" by 18" photograph of the contenders was not so hot, selling for only $2. But an 8" by 10" photograph signed only by Pacquiao was sold for $29.99.

A signed Pacquiao-Morales rematch poster is selling for $16.50, up from its original price of $9.99.

Chrome lighter

A Pacquiao "No Fear" shirt is selling for $17, from the original price of $15.

A Pacquiao chrome lighter, made by a jewelry store in Canada, is selling for $19.98.

But some items, such as DVD copies of the rematch, remain unsold.

Other items still searching for buyers are a TKO mitt signed by both Pacquiao and Morales ($149.99) and an autographed headgear ($124.99).

Another Pacquiao item still searching for a buyer is a new pair of white wristbands.

Wristbands ignored

Despite pleas from a Connecticut-based seller, the wristbands are being ignored.

"This package of wristbands is extremely rare and difficult to find. Even in Manila it is difficult to find Darlington products featuring Manny's endorsement. As Manny says, 'Darlington, *siyempre*.' Here is your chance to own this brand new pair of wristbands. Supply is extremely limited," the seller wrote.

A Philippine-based seller is also having a hard time selling videotaped copies of the 10 fights of Pacquiao against Mexican fighters Morales, Marco Antonio Barrera and Juan Manuel Marquez.

Singson gives side

The bout was widely watched in the Philippines and Pacquiao's victory lifted the spirits of Filipinos. But the appearance of First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo and Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson in the ring right after Pacquiao defeated Morales drew sharp criticism.

Singson yesterday explained his presence in the ring at the Thomas & Mack Center in Las Vegas.

"Manny signaled me to join him in the ring. So I did. What's wrong with that?" Singson said in a statement.

"It would have been bad if I did not honor his invitation. He might have been offended."

To his critics, Singson said: "They are just envious."

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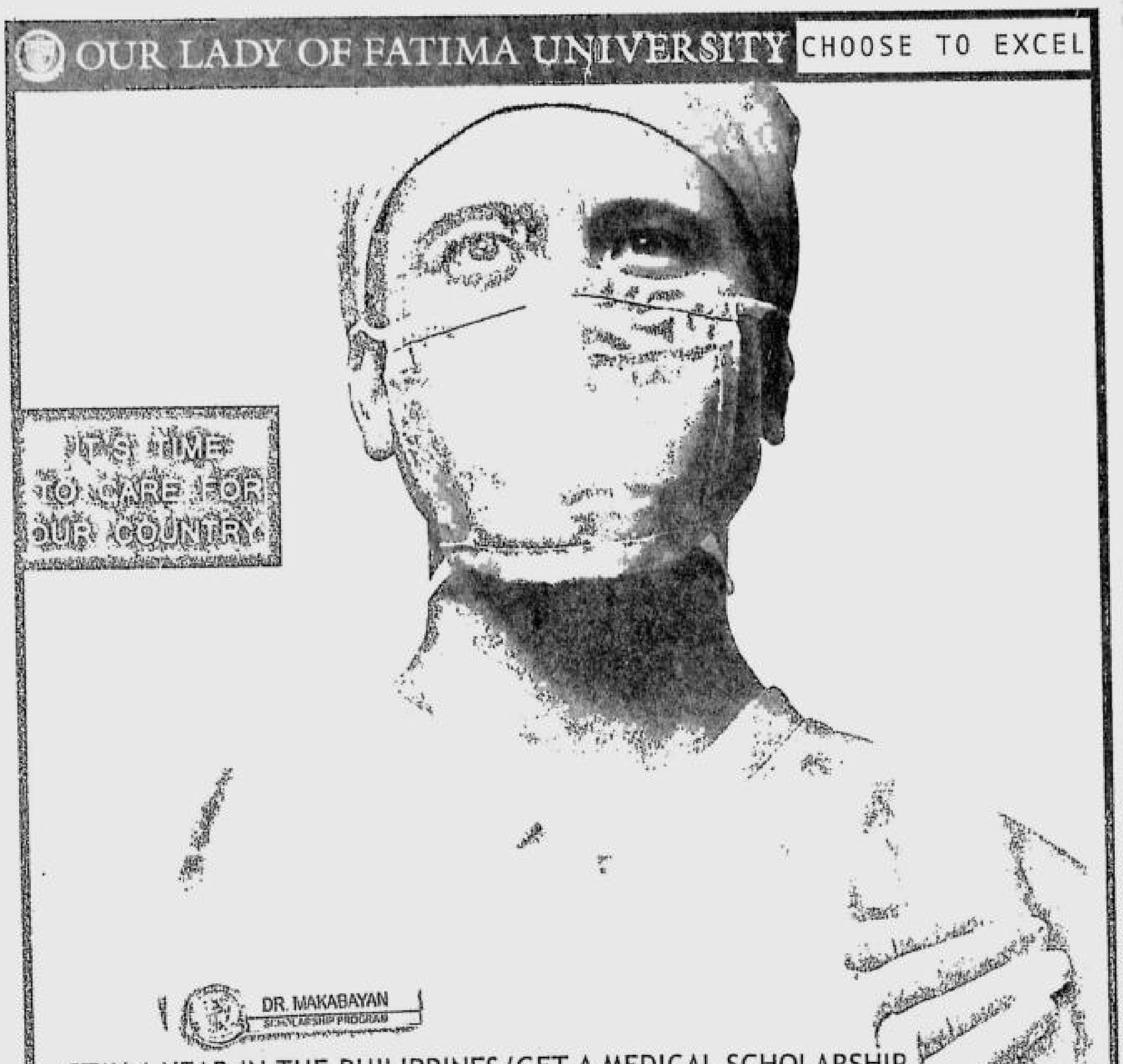

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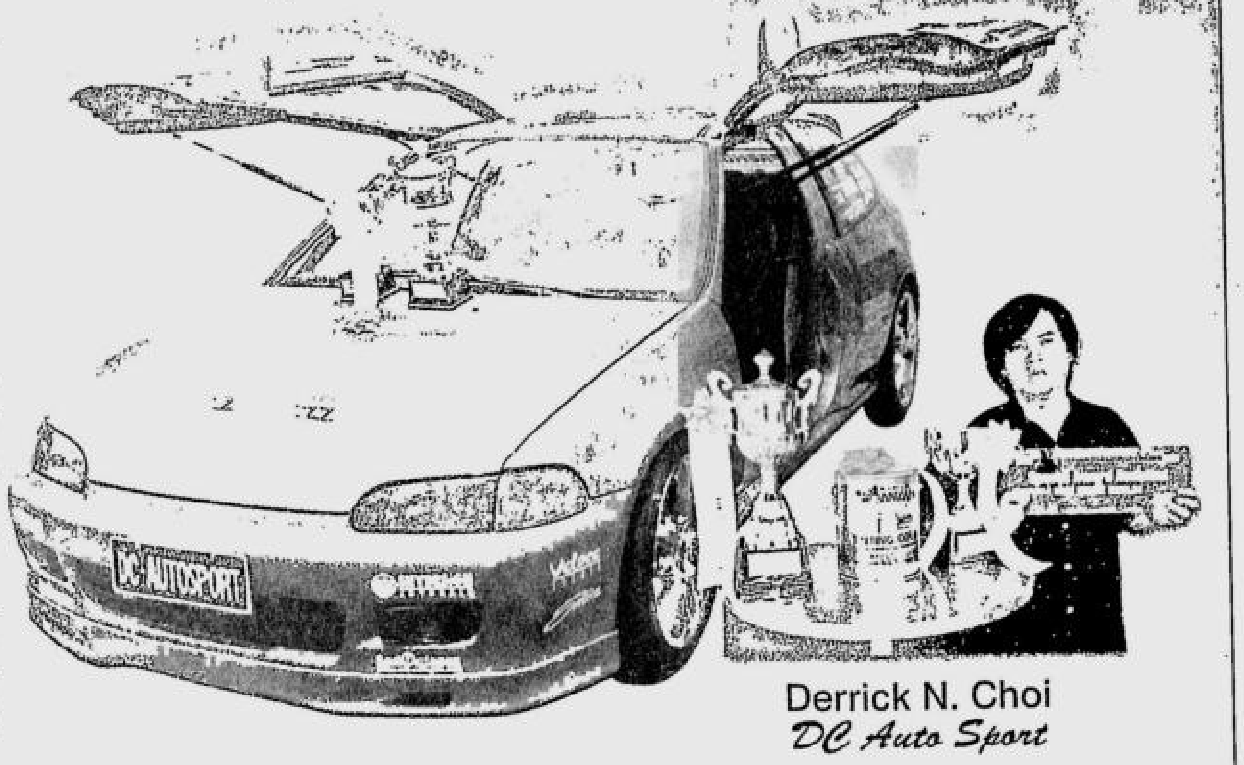

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Sandigan denies Erap's bail petition

By Nelson F. Flores

THE SANDIGANBAYAN YESTERDAY DENIED a request by former President Joseph Estrada to be freed on bail, but said he could choose between continued detention at his sprawling rest house in Tanay, Rizal, or be moved to the Veterans Memorial Medical Center in Quezon City as he prepares to testify at his plunder trial.

Estrada's lawyers had petitioned the Sandiganbayan's Special Division to allow the former President to post bail or be moved to his residence at Polk Street, Greenhills, San Juan, to make him more accessible to them and potential witnesses.

They had explicitly asked that Estrada not be detained at the military hospital because of "its chilling effect" on their client-lawyer discussions and the possibility the toppled leader's quarters would be bugged.

In its seven-page ruling, the court said Estrada's concerns about convenience and quick access could be "sufficiently addressed ... by the accused former President's temporary transfer to the VMMC only for the limited duration of the defense team's preparations for the accused's taking the witness stand including the accused's actual presentation in Court as witness."

"Otherwise, the accused former President shall remain at his place of detention at his property in Tanay, Rizal," the court said.

Government lawyers opposed Estrada's motion for bail or transfer to his Greenhills home but were amenable to his detention at the hospital.

At the same time, the court rejected for lack of merit an earlier motion by the prosecution to set aside a July 2004 ruling allowing Estrada to be detained at his Tanay rest house. The prosecution wanted Estrada returned to Veterans Memorial.

The court said that ordinary legal provisions where an accused should be detained "do not apply in this case since the accused's situation as a detention prisoner is obviously and inevitably affected by extraordinary considerations to safeguard the accused's safety and security as well as to promote and protect public interest."

Moreover, the court stressed that "full control of the Tanay property was turned over to the Court and the Philippine National Police, such that said property is now being controlled and supervised like a jail or detention facility by the PNP under the Court's authority."

Land registry chief can't feign ignorance, staffers say

LAND REGISTRA-tion authority administrator Benedicto Ulep is a former Quezon City judge so he cannot feign ignorance of the law as his defense in two graft cases filed against him before the Ombudsman, according to LRA personnel.

LRA staffers have filed criminal and administrative complaints against Ulep for alleged violation of both Republic Acts 9184 and 3019, also known as the Government Procurement Reform Act and the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, respectively.

Case records showed that sometime in January 2004, Ulep "reorganized" the LRA bids and awards committee (BAC) by folding the agency's project management committee, which he chairs, into the BAC.

That gave him a slot in the BAC, contrary to RA 9184 which states: "In no case shall the (agency's) approving authority be a member of the BAC."

During the next 10 months, Ulep collected almost P300,000 in honoraria from the BAC.

"No act of circumvention could be more obvious. It does not take a genius to unravel the nefarious scheme conjured up by (Ulep)," the complainants told the Ombudsman.

Ulep's "display of gross ignorance of the law made him unfit for public office," they said.

Ulep was appointed head of the LRA, a Department of Justice-attached agency, in February 2002.

Responding to the charges, he said he had acted "in good faith" and returned the honoraria which covered the period of January to November 2004.

In his counter-affidavit, Ulep referred to a Commission on Audit memorandum which said the LRA chief had committed an "honest mistake" in collecting the honoraria. *Jerry E. Esplanada*

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Pimentel still wants P1.3B back

By Philip C. Tubeza

SENATE MINORITY leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. yesterday decried the government's failure to recover the P1.3 billion that the Commission on Elections paid for automated vote-counting machines (ACMs) that were ordered for the 2004 elections but were found to be unsuitable.

Pimentel said the chances of recovering the money have dimmed after the officers and incorporators of MegaPacific, which supplied the ACMs, dissolved the company and closed down its Metro Manila office.

He also cited the findings of Ombudsman graft investigators concerning Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos' allegedly close relationship with MegaPacific's incorporators.

In January 2004, the Supreme Court voided the Comelec contract for the ACMs with MegaPacific for being tainted "with graft and legal infirmities."

The high court discovered that the Comelec's own technical specifications for the voting machines had not been followed.

Pimentel raised the issue of ACM deal at the budget hearings for the Comelec which is asking for P1 billion for its modernization program in the 2006 national budget.

Abalos told legislators that the Comelec would be pursuing its program to install an electronic voting system.

But Pimentel said Congress should not allocate any more funds for poll modernization this year until Abalos and other Comelec commissioners resign "for having lost their credibility."

Out of delicadeza, Abalos and other Comelec officials should refrain from undertaking a new modernization program considering that they are facing criminal charges over the vote-counting machine contract, he said.

Another Magdalo officer claims he escaped

A JUNIOR ARMY OFFICER CHARGED in connection with the 2003 Oakwood mutiny said he escaped from a detention facility in Fort Bonifacio last Jan. 18 after he was wrongly accused of being part of a coup plot.

Army 2nd Lt. Aldrin Baldonado, a member of the Philippine Military Academy Class of 2001, said he was arrested early on Jan. 18 and taken to the Custodial Management Unit (CMU).

"I escaped because I was forcibly detained Wednesday morning even if I'm innocent and even if they can't show me any reason why I'm being detained," Baldonado said in a statement sent through his lawyer Roel Pulido.

"My brother officers told me of an evil intention of the AFP leadership, that we will be detained and presented to the public as coup plotter[s]," he added.

Baldonado's escape took place just hours after four junior Army officers, who are among the soldiers being tried on coup d'etat charges for their alleged participation in the Oakwood mutiny, escaped from the CMU under still unexplained circumstances.

Army spokesperson Maj. Bartolome Bacarro however denied that Baldonado was ever detained.

He said Baldonado was charged with being absent without leave (Awol) from Jan. 5 to Jan. 15.

He said Baldonado reported for duty at the Army Headquarters and Headquarters Support Group (G1) on Jan. 16, and then went Awol on Jan. 17.

"How could he have escaped when he was not detained?" said Bacarro.

Baldonado was one of 71 junior officers charged before a court martial with failure to suppress mutiny after their names appeared in a diskette allegedly containing the list of members of the self-declared "Magdalo" group that took over the Oakwood Premier hotel for a day in July 2003. The diskette was reportedly recovered from the hotel.

Never detained

Five Magdalo soldiers have escaped from jail this month. They include Capt. Nicanor Faeldon, who escaped on Dec. 14, and 1st Lts. Patricio Bumidang, Lawrence San Juan and Sonny Sarmiento, and Capt. Nathaniel Rabonza who bolted on Jan. 18.

Baldonado was never detained with the other mutineers.

But he and two other officers have not been cleared of the charges despite a certification from Maj. Gen. Alexander Yano that Baldonado was with him in Mindanao at the time of the mutiny.

Pulido said he became worried about Baldonado after the Army declared him Awol on Jan. 19.

But Baldonaldo reportedly contacted his mother on the evening of Jan. 19 to say he was "safe."

In his statement, Baldonado claimed fellow soldiers had allowed him to leave the detention compound.

He also claimed to have stayed overnight at the house of a sympathetic senior officer, and that on Jan. 19 he joined the four Army officers who had escaped.

He claimed the senior officer was sheltering the escapees.

State prosecutors meanwhile are opposing the transfer of three Magdalo officers, led by Navy Lt. Antonio Trillanes III, saying the timing of the request for transfer was "highly suspect" and that the men can be considered "serious flight risks."

In a five-page comment, State Prosecutor Juan Pedro Navera warned that the transfer of the Magdalo soldiers from their detention facility at the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the the Philippines (Isafp) to the Marine Detention Center in Fort Bonifacio may result in their escape.

"The timing of the motion to be transferred to the Marine brig is highly suspect. It bears stressing … the accused-movants never mentioned the escape of their co-conspirator, fugitive accused (Capt. Nicanor Faeldon) on Dec. 14, 2005," Navera said.

In a motion, defense counsel Ruel Pulido had sought the transfer of Trillanes, Capt. James Layug and Capt. Gary Alejano to Fort Bonifacio. *Dona Pazzibugan and Tarra V. Quismundo*

5 Magdalo escapees put on hold-departure list

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION HAS placed the five escaped Magdalo mutineers on its hold-departure watchlist to prevent them from slipping out of the country.

BI Commissioner Alipio Fernandez Jr. issued the order on Friday, three days after Army Capt. Nathaniel Rabonza and First Lieutenants Patricio Bumidang Jr., Sonny Sarmiento and Lawrence San Juan bolted out of their detention cells inside Fort Bonifacio.

"We have instructed our immigration officers that if any of these fugitives are encountered, they should not be allowed to leave and should be turned over to the military instead," Fernandez said in a statement.

Earlier placed on the watchlist was Marine Capt. Nicanor Faeldon, who gave his military escorts the slip during a hearing of his coup d'etat case in Makati in December. A hold-departure order was issued last year against Faeldon upon the instruction of the Department of Justice.

The four officers, except Bumidang who was not charged with coup d'etat, are also the subject of arrest warrants.

The Magdalo officers are among those who participated in the July 2003 Oakwood mutiny, where rebel soldiers took over a serviced apartment complex in the Makati business district and demanded the resignation of President Macapagal-Arroyo for allegedly abetting corruption in the military.

After successful negotiations, the mutineers later surrendered peacefully.

Since becoming a fugitive, Faeldon has called on the people to join his cause in unseating the President, while the escape of the four Army officers was linked to another plot to destabilize the administration.

The Philippine National Police has offered a P500,000 reward—P100,000 for each officer—for any information that could lead to the arrest of the fugitives.

But Gina de la Cruz, convenor of the Laban ng Masa and secretary general of Alab Katipunan, appealed to the public not to be enticed by the reward.

"Do not be blinded by the reward. (The five) are not fugitives but principled soldiers of the people," she said. *With Luige A. del Puerto*

Cha-cha starts in Congress with bid to revive Sabah claim

By Norman Bordadora

THE CAMPAIGN TO AMEND THE CONstitution began on an earnest note at the House of Representatives yesterday with the committee on constitutional amendments adopting a "working draft" provision on national territory which could revive the Philippine claim to the East Malaysian state of Sabah.

The committee unanimously adopted a proposed amendment that would redefine the national territory to include territories over which the Philippines has "historic right or legal title."

Cagayan de Oro City Rep. Constantino Jaraula, chair of the committee on constitutional amendments, said during a hearing yesterday that the framers of the 1987 Constitution erred in removing the clause from the Charter.

"This had been studied very well by the 1972 [Constitutional Convention] delegates and we are trying to restore it," said Jaraula who was himself a delegate to that convention.

He said the Constitution should protect the heirs of the Sultan of Sulu, the proprietary rulers of Sabah who claim to have merely leased, not sold, the territory to the British East India Company which in turn passed it on to the British Crown and then to the post-colonial state of Malaysia.

"It should protect the country in regard to the dispersed islands in the Spratlys. We would have no basis to object to incursions into our sea lanes without this," Jaraula said.

Jaraula said a restoration of the clause would revive the Philippine claim to Sabah and would provide the basis for the protection of the country's sea lanes around the Kalayaan islands in the disputed Spratlys group. He also said it would also cover the Philippines' claim to the Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea.

No objection was made to the motion to adopt the amendment and the motion was readily adopted.

Jaraula, who authored the working draft, would not go into the details or implications of the adoption of the provision but maintained it had already been thoroughly studied.

Davide named adviser on poll reforms

By Christine O. Avendaño and Jerome Aning

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO YESterday named former Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. as her Presidential Adviser on Electoral Reforms and promptly tasked him to oversee reforms in the poll system.

The President announced Davide's appointment at the conclusion of the Council of State meeting in Malacañang which included discussions on reforming the electoral system.

"And to shepherd these electoral reforms, I am very proud that former Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. has consented to be my Presidential Adviser on Electoral Reforms," Ms Arroyo told reporters.

Davide headed the Commission on Elections from February 1988 to January 1990 and was responsible for crafting the agency's rules of procedure.

Asked if the President gave him a time frame to implement reforms, Davide said there must be one "because of the urgency of the reforms," and vowed to get the reforms done "as soon as possible."

A draft of the executive order creating the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Electoral Reforms showed that the body would examine the electoral process and system and would make appropriate recommendations to the President.

DAVIDE

The draft EO also said Davide would assist the President "in searching for worthy appointees to the institution(s) conferred by the Constitution with the charge of the enforcement and administration of laws relevant to the conduct of elections."

The EO also directed Davide to submit his report and recommendations to the President not later than 60 days from the start of his work.

Former President Fidel V. Ramos said he expected the poll reforms to be implemented in time for the mid-term elections next year.

Ramos said that during discussions yesterday, there was consensus among the group on the need for the 2007 election to push ahead.

For his part, Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos said he welcomed the prospect of working with Davide.

"[Davide's] appointment is most welcome and we're definitely going to submit [to him] our recommendations concerning electoral reforms," he told reporters.

Abalos said he and other commissioners would be meeting with Davide to "discuss the agency's modernization program as well as possible amendments to the Omnibus Election Code."

Abalos added that with Davide's help, Congress might finally be persuaded to give its approval—and funding—to Comelec's long-delayed modernization program.

"Hopefully, Congress would approve our modernization program and all possible laws that go with it," he said.

Comelec is currently facing a credibility crisis following disclosures that one of its commissioners allegedly plotted with President Macapagal-Arroyo to rig the May 2004 presidential elections.

House committee OKs budget

By Michael Lim Ubac

AFTER A LONG DELAY, THE HOUSE APpropriations committee has approved in toto the P1.05 trillion national budget presented to Congress last August by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The committee adopted late Monday the 2006 General Appropriations Act, including the P5-billion "Kilos Asenso Support Fund" and the P3-billion "Kalayaan Barangay Program Fund."

The P8-billion fund, which will be tucked into the budget of the Office of the President, has provoked opposition suspicions that Malacañang was inserting it in the budget as a form of pork barrel for local government officials.

The amount is more than the proposed combined pork barrel allocations of the House and Senate amounting to P6.2 billion.

The pork barrel is a provision of the budget to fund the pet projects of congressmen and senators and is a known to be a source of kickbacks for many legislators.

Now called the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF), it was reduced last year to P40 million (from P70 million) for each House member and to P120 million (from P200 million) for each senator.

The President herself called for cuts in the legislators' pork barrel in 2004 as part of the government's cost-cutting measures to tame the budget deficit.

As of press time, the House majority had not come up with an explanation as to why the congressional pork barrel was increased by P100 million.

Congress allocated P8 billion for PDAF in 2004, P6.1 billion in 2005 and 6.2 billion this year.

Significantly, the approved budget does not contain any provisions for a plebiscite or any other expenses for the Charter reform being strongly espoused by the House majority.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye has denied some senators' allegations that the two new items in the proposed national budget were pork barrel funds.

Bunye said "these are funds for the 10-point pro-poor agenda designed to put more food on the table, shelter over families and education for those who cannot afford it."

Budget Secretary Romulo Neri has explained that the Kilos Asenso Fund is part of the P13.7-billion "healing fund" created by Ms Arroyo to "heal the wounds" inflicted by the people power uprisings of 1986 and 2001 and to address poverty.

He said it was a performance-based counterpart fund intended for local government units "for development spending."

Ex-SC chief to address bishops on nat'l situation

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE COUNTRY'S ROMAN Catholic bishops yesterday prepared themselves for this year's first plenary meeting later in the week with a briefing on the national situation by former Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr.

Davide's talk was part of a three-day seminar-workshop before members of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) gather in a closed-door plenary assembly on Saturday at the Pope Pius XII Catholic Center in Manila.

The workshop was off limits to the media.

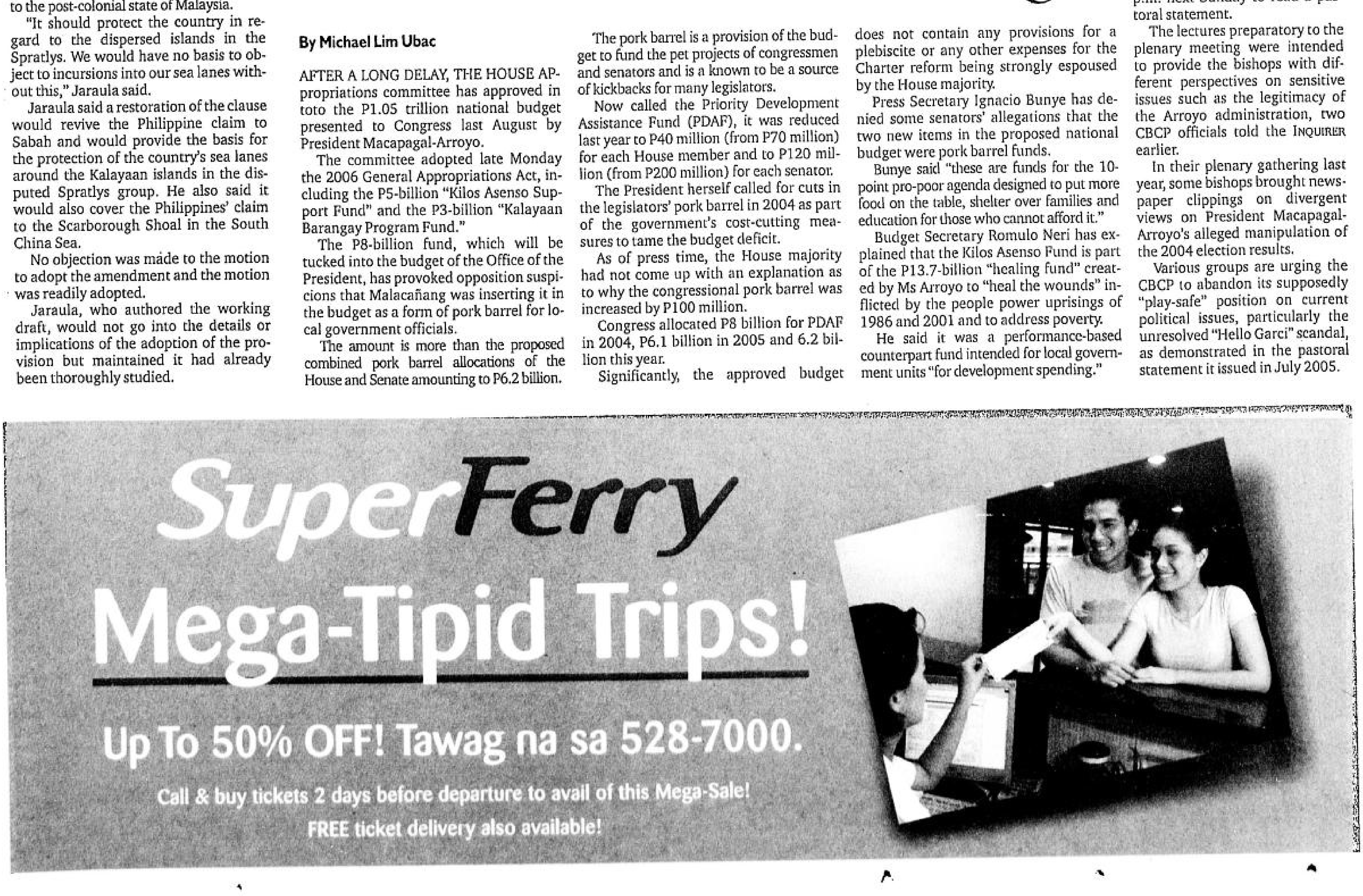
Also scheduled to enlighten the bishops on the national situation yesterday were Christian Monsod, former Commission on Elections chair, and law expert Fr. Miguel Bernas.

The CBCP media office said the bishops would face the press at 4 p.m. next Sunday to read a pastoral statement.

The lectures preparatory to the plenary meeting were intended to provide the bishops with different perspectives on sensitive issues such as the legitimacy of the Arroyo administration, two CBCP officials told the INQUIRER earlier.

In their plenary gathering last year, some bishops brought newspaper clippings on divergent views on President Macapagal-Arroyo's alleged manipulation of the 2004 election results.

Various groups are urging the CBCP to abandon its supposedly "play-safe" position on current political issues, particularly the unresolved "Hello Garci" scandal, as demonstrated in the pastoral statement it issued in July 2005.



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An Appeal to President Gloria Macagapal Arroyo for the Release of the Names of West Negros College Nursing Examinees

HER EXCELLENCY GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines
Malacañang Palace, Manila,
Philippines

Dear Madam President:

In behalf of the December 2005 nursing examinees of West Negros College whose names and examination results were withheld by the Professional Regulatory Commission or PRC, we are writing this letter to appeal to your good office to intervene in our behalf for the release of our names. More than a month had passed from the release of the results of the 2005 December Nursing Licensure Examination, and yet we have not received any communication from PRC as to the status of our examination results nor are we in the pass or fail list. We all feel that it is our right to know the result regardless whether we have passed or not in the examination so that we can plan and move ahead with our lives.

Representations have been made by our school and meeting between PRC and the Commission on Higher Education or CHED had been done, yet nothing definite came out of it. What is sad to note is that we have not received any written communication from PRC informing us of the reason why our names were not released and whenever we call the PRC Office no definite answer was given.

Until now what we have are hearsays that the reason for the withholding of our names is due to subject overloading. However, if this is the case, the approval of the overloading is delegated by CHED to the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) as per CHED Hero Memorandum No. 147 series of 2001, a copy of which is attached. This circular has authorized the dean of the school to approve overloads of students, subject sequencing, substitution and accreditation of units earned. This is the very reason why CHED had issued our S.O. or special order that qualifies us to take the nursing examination. Granting without admitting that there may be requirements not complied; it would be just and proper for PRC to inform us so that we can make the necessary action.

Up to this moment we are still in the dark. Therefore, we appeal to you Madam President to help us. We have studied so hard, made sacrifices with our families, spent time and money for tuitions just to be able to graduate and take the board examination so that we can become registered nurses. Becoming a nurse would not only give us a brighter professional advancement both here and abroad but also will enable us to help fulfill our moral duty to help our country in earning dollars that could boost our economy. In addition this will give our families decent lives and secure the future of our children. Delaying the results would deprive not only us of these chances but also our country and our fellowmen in favor of other nationalities aspiring to take advantage of the opportunities in the demand for nurses abroad.

It has been a long and anxious wait for us and this has affected our lives, our work and our families. The mental anguish, sleepless nights and pain that we have gone through in the past days could not be measured and no amount of money can compensate for this ordeal. While we believe that we are trying to do our best for our family and for our country we are at a quandary why a government agency stands between what we aspire for. As nurses, we intend to uphold the dignity and respect that Filipino professionals deserve. We have sought all avenues to seek remedies for this, yet to no avail. We feel that we have been judged, convicted and sentenced without due process, thus this desperate appeal to your sense of justice. We hope that through this letter you will empathize with us and hear our plea for assistance and expedite the release of our nursing examination results.

Thank you.

Respectfully yours,
December 2005 West Negros College Nursing Examinees

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AFP: Junior officers being recruited for coup

From page A1

The discovery of the recruitment followed the Jan. 17 escape of four junior Army officers who were part of the Oakwood mutiny on July 27, 2003.

Capt. Nathaniel Rabonza and 1st Lieutenants Lawrence San Juan, Sonny Sarmiento and Patricio Bumidang Jr. escaped from a detention facility in Fort Bonifacio under still unknown circumstances.

A month earlier, on Dec. 14, another Oakwood mutineer, Marine Capt. Nicanor Faeldon, escaped from his military escorts outside the Makati Regional Trial Court.

Yesterday, another Oakwood mutineer, Lt. Aldrin Baldonado, said he escaped from his detention in Fort Bonifacio on Jan. 18, or a day after the Magdalo 4's escape.

Threat

While military commanders were looking into the recruitment attempts, a rumor spread on the night of Jan. 21 that AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga had resigned.

Senga denied this on Monday in a press conference, where he admitted "a threat" against the Arroyo administration.

Due to the coup rumors, Senga, along with the heads of the Army, Navy and Air Force, made a rare show of force at the press conference to declare that the military remained "intact" behind the chain of command.

Senga reluctantly admitted the "threat" to unseat Ms Arroyo, but tried to downplay it as "not serious."

Orchestrated

Kison said the spread of the rumor of Senga's resignation was timed while the latter was on a plane en route to Manila from Cebu, and thus could not be reached on his mobile phone.

"That's why it's been said the [coup] plans are comprehensive," Kison said, adding:

"It looks orchestrated. [Events] are happening at the same time—the escape, the rumor that General Senga has resigned, the things they've been saying. It's orchestrated."

On Jan. 19, Navy Lt. Antonio Trillanes IV, spokesperson of the "Magdalo" mutineers, had warned in a statement that the escape was "just part of things to come."

Kison said that while military authorities had an idea who were involved in the recruitment, no one had been arrested or "held for questioning."

Asked if those behind the recruitment were civilians or retired or active military officers, he said: "We don't know yet."

"The recruitment attempt was discovered early. It's not yet a plan to [stage a coup d'etat]. They are still recruiting," he stressed, adding:

"Yes, the recruitment is going on. That's why our commanders are correcting this, talking to their men about their gripes."

Kison also said the commanders came to learn about the recruitment because some junior officers had informed them about it.

First time

It was the first time the AFP categorically admitted that recruitment was going on in the ranks for a coup d'etat.

Last month, unnamed Army officials claimed to have confirmed a plot to stage a coup d'etat while the President was in Malaysia from Dec. 10 to 11. But the military and police leadership publicly denied there was such a plot.

An AFP officer who spoke on condition of anonymity divulged a supposed plan to get Trillanes and other Magdalo leaders out of military detention.

"There are plans to rescue him and the others," said the officer, adding that the military was confident Trillanes could not escape on his own.

Put up or shut up

During a budget hearing at the Senate, a furious Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. assailed Senga, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez and presidential chief of staff Michael Defensor for supposedly fanning coup rumors and dared them to arrest the plotters.

"All this talk by General Senga about a coup, Secretary Gonzalez saying there's a coup, and Secretary Defensor saying there's a coup—these are irresponsible statements," Pimentel said.

He added: "General Senga has to put up or shut up. That includes Secretary Gonzalez and Secretary Defensor because they're not helping any."

Pimentel flared up after officials of the Department of Budget and Management said coup rumors would adversely affect the foreign exchange rate.

The senator said Senga, Gonzalez and Defensor should order the arrest of the coup plotters and file charges against them instead of fanning rumors of a fresh destabilization plot.

"If they have the goods on people, if there's a plot, they should arrest ... all those connected with the plot. That's a crime. For them to say that there's a plot, coup attempt etc., they're not helping our country any," he said.

Gonzalez had earlier warned of a coup attempt between Friday midnight and Saturday morning, citing his own sources. Defensor, for his part, warned that the plotters would be met "fire with fire."

In a statement, Pimentel theorized that the administration and the AFP brass could be merely trying to put up a "brave face" by claiming that the junior officers lacked the capability to mount a coup.

He said the administration and the military seemed oblivious to the "growing unrest in the AFP, which may have lulled them into a false sense of security."

Pimentel said that if the 115,000-member military remained united behind the Arroyo administration, the escape of the five Magdalo officers would not have happened.

"In other words, Gloria should feel worried and jolted because while the generals may still be supporting her, the junior officers may be harboring another view—they share the sentiment of the majority of Filipinos for the President's removal," he said.

With reports from TJ Burgonio and Luige A. del Puerto

President to appoint 54 generals

From page A1

with forces under their command, turn around and fight against her."

He observed that the number of generals scheduled to retire this year—54, or 40 percent of the 134 in the active service—was "unusually large."

Ermita was referring particularly to the two-star generals in charge of eight divisions (which in turn have four brigades, each led by a one-star general) in Zamboanga, Rizal, Cagayan de Oro, Isabela, Iloilo, Cebu, Samar and Bicol.

Other key military divisions that were integral parts of past coup attempts were the Marines, Scout Rangers and Special Forces.

One of the most anticipated retirements this year is that of Gen. Generoso Senga, the AFP chief of staff, in July.

His most likely successor is the Army chief, Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, whom observers describe as fiercely loyal to the President.

Service reputation

Esperon, one of the military officials mentioned in the "Hello Garci" tape alleging fraud in the presidential election of 2004, was AFP deputy chief of staff for operations in that year.

Except for the AFP chief of staff, whose term can be extended at the discretion of the President, all generals are supposed to retire after 30 years of service or when they reach 56 years of age, whichever comes first, Ermita said.

The Board of Generals recommends to the President the junior officers it deems worthy of promotion to the elite ranks of the generals.

The recommendation is based on several factors such as seniority, competence, discipline and loyalty, or what Ermita called "a service reputation built on 15 or more years of experience."

"But ultimately, it is the President who will make the final choice, and I believe that the most important consideration will be loyalty," Ermita said.

However, loyalty to the Constitution and the Commander in Chief should not be equated with "blind loyalty" because soldiers are capable of making intellectual and moral judgments on their own, he said.

"[The strongman Ferdinand] Marcos appointed all his generals, but they turned against him. There would have been no Edsa People Power I [in February 1986] if all military men had blind loyalty," Ermita said.

'Utang na loob'

With her appointment of Senga last year, Ms Arroyo has signed the promotion papers of eight generals in just four years in office—more than any other President in the post-Edsa years.

She has also named retired generals to high government positions.

Ermita said soldiers were just like most Filipinos nursing a debt of gratitude toward people who had promoted them. But he said this *utang ng loob* could only go so far in the military, which operates according to a rigid, hierarchical structure different from civilian organizations.

"Soldiers are not mindless sheep. They can think for themselves, but all within the organization," Ermita said.

The chance to reward junior officers with promotions comes at an opportune time for the President, who is facing a fresh wave of unrest, especially among the lower-rank officers.

Apart from the rumors of a coup plot confirmed by Senga and Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, Ms Arroyo is said to be concerned about her eroding base of support in the military.

Last weekend, military insiders said cracks were showing in the AFP, as supposedly illustrated by the escape within four weeks of five officers who took part in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny, and the ease with which rebel officers had been speaking out against the administration.

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Psychic sees GMA finishing term ...

From page A1

nent people who could suffer from this is President Macapagal-Arroyo, said Danny Atienza at the Bulong Pulungan forum yesterday.

Atienza said another attempt would be made to unseat Ms Arroyo, whose allies killed an impeachment complaint against her last year over revelations in the "Hello Garci" tapes that she may have manipulated the 2004 presidential election.

"She should be able to go through June 6, 2006. If she manages to get through this day, she has a good chance that she will stay longer in her post," Atienza said.

In warning that this coming June 6 may be crucial for Ms Arroyo, Atienza pointed out that it is the sixth month in 2006. The date could be taken as "666," which he said was the number of the devil.

Atienza said he had been studying the zodiac to look at the fortunes of bigwigs in politics and business through the years.

Uncanny predictions

He claimed to have correctly predicted the assassination of opposition leader Benigno Aquino, the dismantling of the Ferdinand Marcos dictatorship and Fidel Ramos' election as President.

He said he knew Joseph Estrada would win the 1998 presidential election but that he would not complete his term.

Atienza also said he saw the impending deaths of former Sen. Raul Roco and movie actor Fernando Poe Jr. although he incorrectly predicted that three presidential candidates in the 2004 balloting would die.

He also said he predicted the July 1990 earthquake and the December 2004 tsunami.

Year of traitors

"This is the year of traitors and the devil," he said.

He also warned that Ms Arroyo could be stabbed in the back by somebody close to her. Other politicians were also likely to meet the same fate.

"What's scary here is that you would not know who is really your ally," he said.

Should Ms Arroyo be unseated, which he said could be done either through assassination or physical removal from the Palace, Atienza said another woman would replace her.

He also said it had been his earlier stand that presidents with "el" and "os" in their names were the strong ones and those without would have turbulent reigns. Ms Arroyo's name does not contain such letter combinations, he said, but Ramos has both.

"That is why he is strong. He'll be a part of the scene as long as he's alive," Atienza said.

Potential contenders

Atienza named Oscar Orbos and Senators Nene Pimentel and Manuel Villar as possible future contenders for president.

Echoing an earlier statement of Mike Defensor, who is not known as a psychic but as the President's chief of staff, Atienza said that should trouble break out this year, it would be bloody.

"Kung magkakaroon ng gulo, hindi pwedeng hindi dadanak ang dugo (If there will be violence, blood will definitely be spilled)," he said.

Atienza also stood by his earlier prediction that it was Poe who won the 2004 election and that if Poe was not sworn in, trouble would erupt in the streets.

Two senators and two Cabinet members would also leave us this year, he said.

Both sexes susceptible

On the personal level, Atienza said relationships would also be marked by betrayal. No sex was singled out as the culprit, as both males and females were susceptible to this in 2006.

But he also said things not related to politics would be on the upswing, citing oil in the Philippines as example. He said the country would benefit from oil to be found in Luzon and even named Tarlac, Pampanga and Marikina as the places where this could be found.

For the profit-oriented, Atienza said nighttime and 24-hour businesses would prosper. He added endeavors launched in the night would likely succeed, including a plan to topple Ms Arroyo.

Big earthquakes?

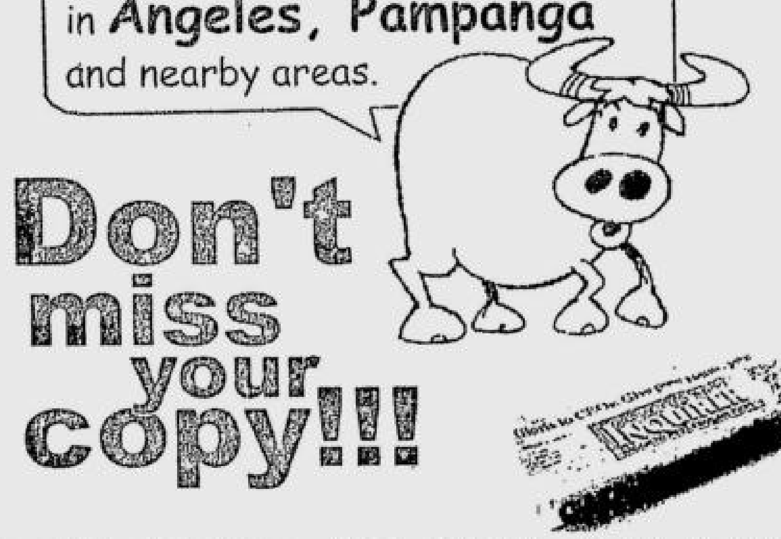
Atienza said northern Luzon was a good place to put up businesses this year, saying the area would have its own "Las Vegas." He also advised people to start buying dollars, as the peso would hit P60 to the greenback this year.

He predicted a big earthquake would hit the country before July, while another would topple the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco.

He also lamented that Philippine culture would be buried under an onslaught of TV shows from Korea, Japan and the United States.

Atienza said he did not believe in feng shui—the Chinese belief that the proper placement of structures would bring good fortune. The Chinese Year of the Fire Dog was not material to his predictions, he said.

"I only believe in God," he said.



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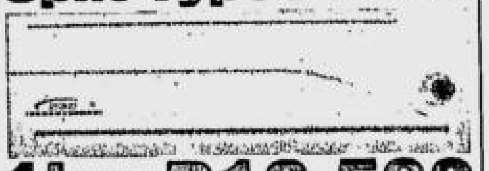

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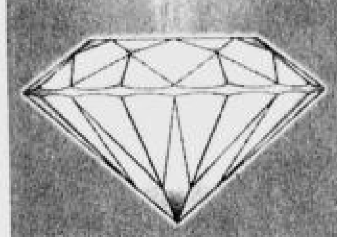

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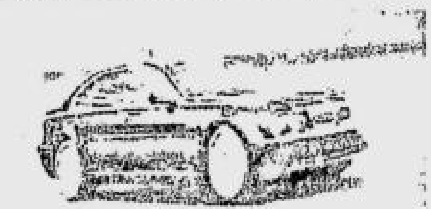

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Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Russia reopens gas dispute with Ukraine

MOSCOW—RUSSIA REOPENED ITS GAS ROW WITH UKRAINE ON Monday as the Russian state monopoly Gazprom all but accused Kiev again of stealing gas and reducing onward supplies to Europe.

And another of Russia's pro-Western neighbors, Georgia, smarted in anger after a weekend blast shut off Russian gas supplies and triggered an energy crisis in the country.

The twin developments threw a new spotlight on Russia's role as the main energy supplier for the vast ex-Soviet region and Western Europe.

Some of Moscow's neighbors say the Kremlin is using energy supply as a political weapon against former Soviet states like Georgia and Ukraine which have opted to shift towards the West and away from Moscow's sphere of influence.

"We can call it gas shrinkage, offtake, legal or illegal, whatever," Gazprom export chief Medvedev said in a sharp attack on Ukraine broadcast on Russian state television. "But what is happening in reality is that gas is being held by Ukraine above agreed levels, which is not allowing us to fully meet our obligations with international buyers... We can't work like that," he said.

Ukraine, a key transit route for Russia's huge supplies to Europe, said however that it was meeting its obligations.

But Prime Minister Yuri Yekhanurov acknowledged the country was burning more domestic gas because of the cold weather in which temperatures in Kiev alone slumped to minus 25 Celsius on Monday. "We will do everything to cut our domestic consumption."

"Yesterday Ukraine consumed 407 million cubic meters of gas and our Russian partners are nervous because of it," he told reporters.

Ukraine was using around 280 million cubic meters a day at the start of the year, when temperatures were much milder.

"I am grateful to Gazprom for their understanding of this situation caused by considerable drop in temperatures and that it allowed to increase daily consumption limits for Ukraine," said Yekhanurov, striking a conciliatory tone.

Russia earlier this month cut off supplies to Ukraine over failure to agree a new pricing and supply contract.

The two sides finally agreed a new contract on Jan. 4 under which Ukraine agreed to pay prices closer to normal European levels.

Meanwhile, though gas began flowing to Georgia again after the weekend disruption of supplies following two explosions in southern Russia, the row between Russian and the small Caucasus state simmered on.

Georgian officials said Russian special services were behind the explosions. *Reuters*

4 British diplomats accused of espionage

MOSCOW—AN ESPIONAGE scandal redolent of the Cold War unfolded Monday after Russia accused four British diplomats of spying and linked some of their activities to the financing of prominent private organizations including the Eurasia Foundation and the Moscow Helsinki Group.

A grainy black-and-white video, broadcast on state television on Sunday night and shown repeatedly again on Monday, was said to show a British diplomat picking up a rock that was said to conceal a communications device used to download and transmit classified information through handheld computers.

The rock, the size of a watermelon, and the device, said to be able to transmit and receive data at distances of more than 60 ft, were seized near Moscow, prompting a search across the city for similar devices, Sergei N. Ignatchenko, the chief spokesperson for Russia's intelligence agency, the Federal Security Service, told Russian reporters.

A second device was found, but "the British intelligence service managed to retrieve one of the gadgets," he said.

A Russian citizen accused of complicity has been arrested, but another spokesperson for the Russian intelligence agency, Nikolai N. Zakharov, declined to say whether he had been formally charged. Zakharov would say only that the spy ring had been discovered and broken up at the beginning of winter.

The fate of the four diplomats remained unclear. Ignatchenko said their possible expulsion would be determined "at the political level."

The scandal threatens to raise diplomatic tensions, even as Russia has assumed the presidency of the Group of 8 industrial nations, which includes Britain. *New York Times News Service*

Pinochet's wife, kids arrested

SANTIAGO—THE wife and four children of former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet were arrested on Monday on tax evasion and fraud charges as part of an investigation into secret, multimillion-dollar bank accounts.

Officials of the court who asked not to be identified said Judge Carlos Cerda ordered the arrest of Pinochet's wife, Lucia Hiriart, and five of their children on charges of filing "maliciously incomplete" and false tax declarations involving millions of dollars.

Court officials said four of the children were successfully arrested but that a fifth child, Pinochet's daughter Lucia, had failed to answer a court subpoena to answer questions about nearly $1 million in undeclared taxes. Judge Cerda also ordered the arrests of Monica Ananias, Pinochet's personal secretary, and Oscar Aitken, the former executor of Pinochet's will.

Observers say Pinochet, 90, may end up facing prosecution for tax crimes before any of the human rights charges that have mounted against him. *Reuters*

Montenegro train crash kills 39

BIOCE, SERBIA-MONtenegro—Thirty nine people were killed and 135 injured when a packed passenger train derailed on Monday in one of the worst accidents ever in the Balkan state of Montenegro, officials said.

"This is not a final toll," warned deputy Prime Minister Miroslav Ivanisevic after an emergency session of the government.

Among the injured were 75 children, Ivanisevic said, adding that the government "will use all possible means to investigate the accident." The train traveling from the town of Bijelo Polje to the capital Podgorica derailed and rolled 30 m down a ravine around 5 p.m. *AFP*

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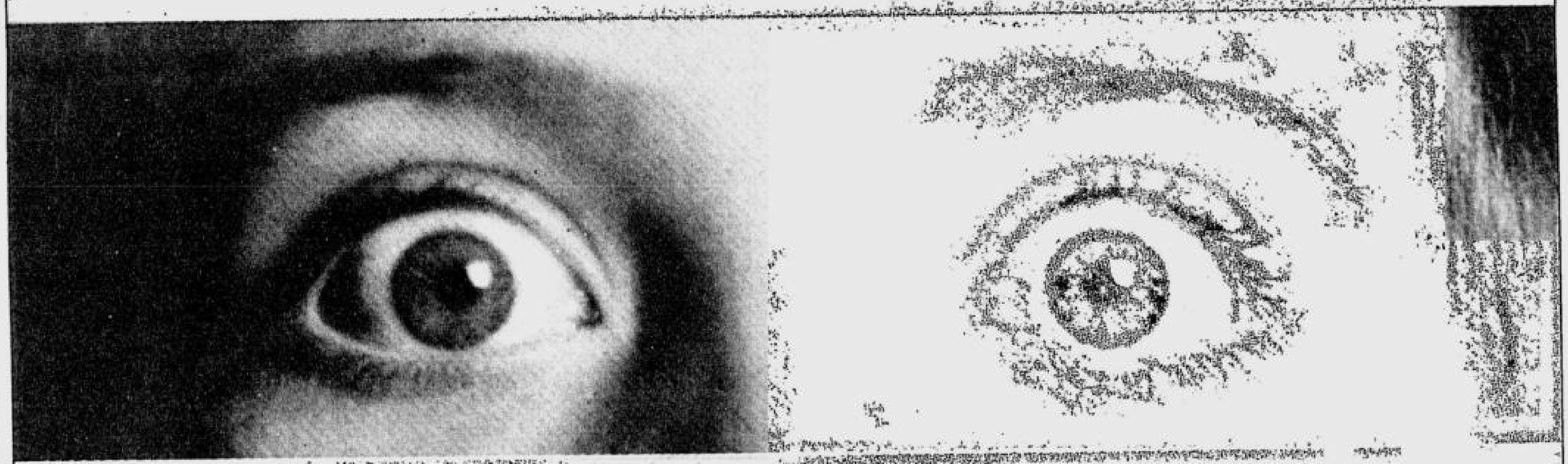

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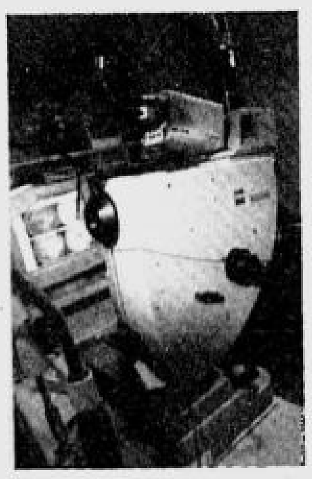

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WORLDBRIEFS

Canada's Liberals ousted

OTTAWA—Canada's right-wing Conservative Party surged to victory in Monday's general election, smashing the 12-year rule of Prime Minister Paul Martin's Liberals, television projections showed. Stephen Harper, the 46-year-old Conservative leader, who pulled ahead midway through the campaign, ended an era of centrist politics in Canada, as voters punished the Liberals for a clutch of corruption scandals. But he will fall short of a majority, and be forced to trawl for support in the 308 seat House of Commons from the leftist New Democratic Party (NDP) and the separatist Bloc Quebecois to form a government, the projections showed. *AFP*

7 Taliban rebels escape

KABUL—Seven mid-ranking Taliban rebels have escaped from Afghanistan's main high-security prison, officials said Tuesday. The men broke out of Policharki Prison, on the outskirts of the capital Kabul, on Sunday, said Gen. Abdul Salam Bakshi, the director of the country's prisons. He said the men had been sentenced to between 16 to 17 years in prison, but he had no other details about their identities or what they were convicted for. They escaped while relatives were visiting them at the prison, the general said. "We've launched a manhunt for these Taliban members," he said. "But there's no sign of them so far." *AP*

Livedoor CEO arrested

TOKYO—Takafumi Horie, 33, chief executive of Livedoor Co., was arrested on Monday evening on suspicion of breaking securities laws by spreading false information to manipulate share prices. A raid on Livedoor by authorities a week ago sparked chaos on the Tokyo stock market, sent share prices plunging and overwhelmed the exchange's computer system with sell orders. A dropout from the prestigious University of Tokyo, Horie set up Livedoor's predecessor, Livin' On the Edge, a decade ago with just $50,000 in capital. By adopting an aggressive acquisition strategy and promoting himself as a brand symbol, he turned that into market capital of more than $6 billion just before last week's raid. *Reuters*

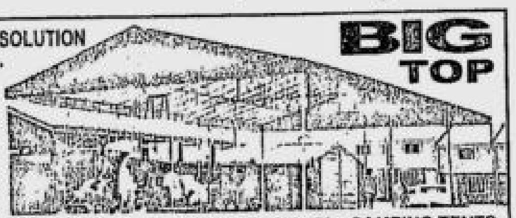
White House starts eavesdropping defense

MANHATTAN, KAN.—THE WHITE House opened a week-long media blitz Monday in defense of the National Security Agency's eavesdropping program, with President George Bush saying he found it "amazing" to be accused of breaking the law by ordering a secret program to intercept international calls and e-mail messages.

As Sen. Pat Roberts of Kansas, the chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, sat beside him, Bush asked a friendly audience of students here at Kansas State University and members of the military from Fort Riley, "If I wanted to break the law, why was I briefing Congress?"

Bush's remarks came hours after Gen. Michael V. Hayden, the nation's second-ranking intelligence official, revealed operational details about the program at a speech in Washington, including the destruction of "accidental" interceptions. But Hayden refused to say exactly how the agency determined that an American's phone call or e-mail message might "involve al-Qaida" before eavesdropping on it.

Among other appearances this week, Dan Bartlett, the communications director, did a round of television interviews Monday morning in defense of the program, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales will give a speech on Tuesday on its legal justifications, and Bush is scheduled to visit the security agency in Fort Meade, Md., on Wednesday to discuss the program. *NYT*



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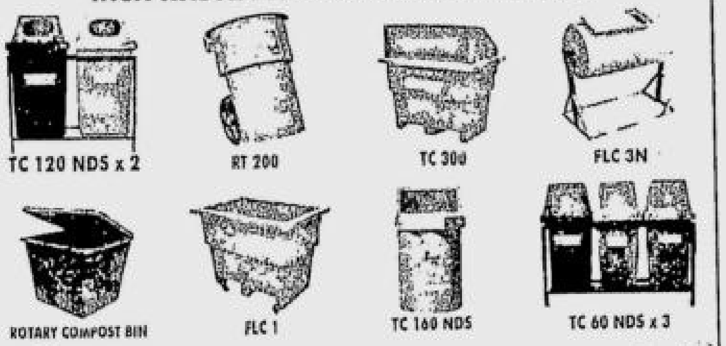

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Suicidal provocation

EDITORIAL

LAST WEEK, JUSTICE SECRETARY RAUL GONZAlez caused yet another stir. He announced that a coup attempt was imminent. His fellow officials at first tried to backpedal things a bit. Then they went ahead—after the coup attempt didn't take place—to say that such attempts were indeed, at the very least, being talked about, and had they taken place, the government would "fight fire with fire." We have no doubt of the government's resolve to put down any mutinies. We also do not doubt that restiveness in the armed forces is increasing, with the added danger that the continuing political crisis is making more and more sectors open to the idea of inviting—if not actually supporting and funding—military intervention.

The question is, what is the duty of the state and, in particular, what is the obligation of the President and her officials in the light of such a trend?

There are certain heavy burdens that any responsible government must bear in mind, if it is to continue to enjoy the presumption of working for the public good. Among these burdens are realizing that the burden of proof is upon it, when it comes to using the armed might of the state. That is, the government is under the obligation to use force as the instrument of last resort; and that, unlike its opponents, it must use its might within the bounds of the law, including the most basic law of all, the Constitution.

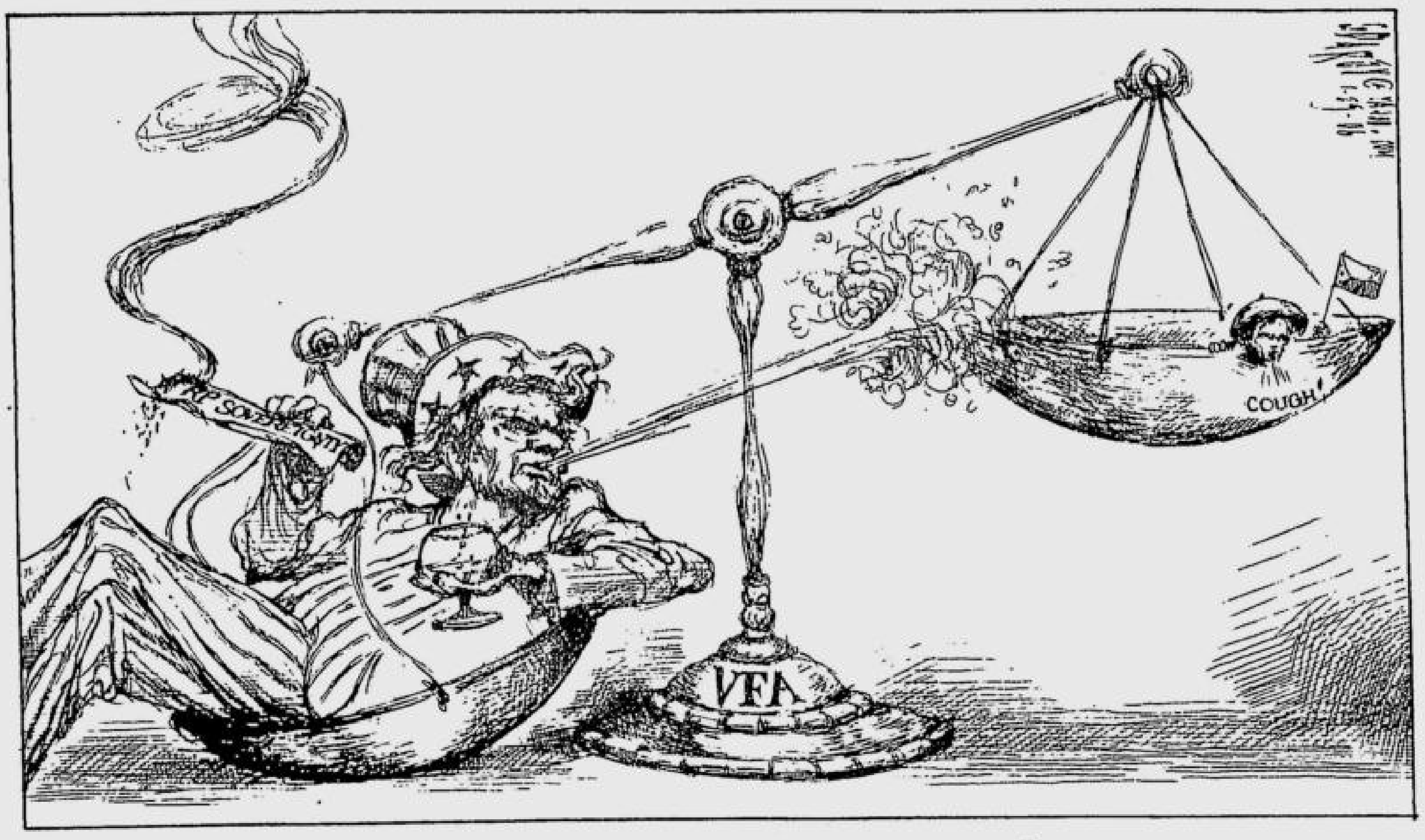
Another burden is the fact that government—more than its enemies—is in a position to spark, and thus unleash public panic and trigger a corresponding collapse of public confidence in the capacity of the state to uphold peace and order. Still another burden is the reality that it is the state and its agents that are vested with the responsibility to exercise sobriety and self-restraint in their public utterances and actions. The state possesses an overwhelming advantage in terms of law and brute force, and the way it tempers its actions is the only thing that differentiates a legitimate, democratic government from a dictatorship in the making.

Therefore, when a member of the Cabinet announces the possibility of a coup, he or she is presumed to speak with the full weight and authority of the President. Actions, such as those of Raul Gonzalez or Michael Defensor, can only be disowned if the President takes some sort of disciplinary action. If, on the other hand, the statements are left unchallenged—or merely subjected to "clarifications"—then it must be assumed they have been approved by the President, and are useful for her purposes.

What purposes could such irresponsible statements serve? Obviously the most immediate one would be to provoke the enemy into action. However, using tough language, or deliberately leaking information to suggest the government is hot on the trail of those interested in doing it harm—"to smoke out the enemy," as an American idiom goes—is placing the country as bait. The welfare, security and peace of mind of the public should not be considered expendable for the purpose of "smoking out" the government's enemies. That would be putting society in too large a danger of being subjected to collateral damage.

Niccolo Machiavelli observed: "The choice of a prince's ministers is a matter of no little importance; they are either good or not according to the prudence of the prince. The first impression that one gets of a ruler and of his brains is from seeing the men that he has about him. When they are competent and faithful, one can always consider him wise, as he has been able to recognize their ability and keep them faithful. But when they are the reverse, one can always form an unfavorable opinion of him, because the first mistake that he makes is in making his choice."

The undeniable frustration in certain quarters of the armed forces, whether sincerely held or merely used as a rhetorical device to cloak adventurism, hinges on the issue of executive abuse of powers, and corruption in the armed forces. These are matters that only the government can address, by demonstrating an adherence to constitutionally sanctioned and time-honored exercise of powers; and by accomplishing genuine, timely reforms in the armed forces. In no other way can resentments be replaced by the adherence to the chain of command and civilian supremacy.



Manny Pacquiao for president!

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE NATIONAL EUPHORIA OVER MANNY Pacquiao's 10th-round TKO of Mexico's Erik Morales has made many Filipinos forget that they are hungry and poor. They even forgot the assassination and coup jitters that the Gonzalez(s) twins floated during the weekend. It was like a massive dose of drugs that put them in the throes of ecstasy. There were no traffic jams; the streets were clear of vehicles and people. No crimes were reported while the bout was being broadcast. What a change Manny's bout brought to Filipino society. If only he could have a boxing bout and win every day, maybe we could solve all our problems.

And wait until he comes home this Friday. The Philippines will roll out the red carpet for him. There will be a ticker tape parade. Politicians will try to outdo one another in bombastic speeches praising him. He will be taken to Malacañang to be photographed with the President, and maybe some of the goodwill will rub off on her.

Ate Glue has already beaten the others to the draw. Minutes after the bout, she called by phone to congratulate Manny, and the latter obliged by parroting her mantra about "unity." Every politician with a ghostwriter issued a statement praising Manny. Political bickering was suspended. What a tremendous amount of goodwill his victory brought to the whole Philippines.

So why don't we make Manny Pacquiao our president? I don't think any Filipino will oppose that at present. On the contrary, I think the whole nation would welcome it.

Look at it this way: 80 percent of Filipinos want Ate Glue to resign but she doesn't want to do that. They cannot get a big enough people power movement to force her to step down because they do not like the prospective successors. Vice President Noli de Castro? A cure that is worse than the disease. Retired Gen. Fortunato Abat? Aaaaargh! Erap? Oh no, not again. Senate President Franklin Drilon? Try again. Speaker Jose de Venecia? Oh, my God!

That is what is saving Ate Glue: her potential successors are not pleasant to contemplate. But if it is going to be Pacquiao, the new national hero, the people would dump her before you can count to eight.

No need to change the Constitution or the system of government. What we need is to change the President.

Even in a snap election, I don't think anybody can beat Pacquiao now. Even if you put together the votes of Ate Glue, FVR and JDV with the help of Garci, I don't think they can beat Manny.

As president, Manny can put fear in the hearts of criminals without offending the bleeding hearts opposed to capital punishment. Those convicted of heinous crimes don't have to be executed. Their punishment will be 10 rounds in the ring with Manny.

So let's start the ball rolling: Manny Pacquiao for President!

* * *

In fact, somebody already proposed that at the Kapihan sa Manila last Monday. And former Sen. Francisco Tatad and lawyer Hector Villacorta, who were the panelists, seemed to agree. "Anybody but GMA," was the unanimous choice.

On Charter change, the former senator said the proposal won't get past the Senate. In fact, the draft constitution written by the GMA-created Consultative Commission and sent to the House of Representatives has already been thrown away by the committee on constitutional amendments. The President has no participation in the writing of a Constitution and so a commission that she has created has no legal authority, he said. The two bodies authorized to write a Constitution, Congress and an elected constitutional convention, would write their own charter. They don't need another body to do it for them, Tatad said.

For his part, Villacorta said changing to a parliamentary system would be a step backward. The presidential/bicameral system was America's improvement of the parliamentary system that the British brought over to the New World. There was no check and balance in the parliamentary system because the executive and legislative departments were combined in parliament.

Our presidential/bicameral system was copied from the American model. And it works wonderfully. The United States is now the richest and most powerful nation in the world.

As for the alleged gridlock in the system, that was intentional so that the two houses of Congress can check each other, Villacorta explained. Haste always makes waste.

All the poor nations in Africa, on the other hand, are parliamentary, he noted. We don't want to be like them.

And look at this contradiction, Tatad and Villacorta said. The administration wants a parliamentary system where a vote of no confidence by a majority of the 250 or so members of parliament will force the prime minister to resign. Right now, 80 percent of the 90 million Filipinos have lost confidence in the President, as shown by opinion polls, and she still doesn't want to resign. In the system the administration wants, less than 200 MPs are enough to force a prime minister to quit. But the President still doesn't want to quit even if approximately 70 million Filipinos have said they no longer have any confidence in her.

And look at this, they said. The American Constitution is still the original that its founding fathers wrote more than 100 years ago. They have made a few amendments, but only one at a time. They have not revised it even once. We, on the other hand, have changed our constitution four times already and want to change it again. We keep changing constitutions when what we have to change are our officials.

A politician for all seasons

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I ATTENDED THE TRIBUTE TO JOVITO Salonga at Club Filipino last Saturday. It might as well have been the official celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Liberal Party, the unofficial, or fake one, being held a couple of days earlier at Plaza Miranda. That was so not merely because most of the pillars of the LP were at Club Filipino, it was so because the authentic voice of the LP was there. No one better embodies the soul of the Liberal Party—or as it should be—than Salonga. In fact, while at that, no one has more claim to Plaza Miranda than Salonga. But that is another story.

Raul Daza did well to remind the folk gathered there that they were not attending a necrological service, to much laughter. True, you couldn't have heard more eulogies for the living. I was party to that crime, having written a piece that appeared in the souvenir program extolling his virtues. I thought I'd share some portions of it with the readers, especially after that survey that suggested politicians were natural-born liars. Not everyone is, some are natural-born magi.

The piece goes:

I first met Salonga, a thing he is not likely to remember, while writing for a magazine. It was in early 1972, I think. He had sufficiently recovered from his wounds at Plaza Miranda the year before and had topped the senatorial elections, winning handily without having to campaign. The first thing that struck me when he appeared in the library of his house was how frail he looked. He moved slowly, almost solemnly. But his handshake was firm. And he was very polite, which awed a kid barely out of college who did not imagine he would be taken seriously. I was still a kid growing up in the province when he was already being spoken about with much awe—No. 1 in the bar exams, No. 1 in senatorial elections. He answered my questions thoughtfully, and from the first time he opened his mouth, all the aura of frailty about his person vanished. There was a rock-like solidity about him, where death had no space to seep in.

Which was what he dwelled on at length: He had been given a second life for a purpose, and he meant to serve that purpose.

He has.

And over a long span of time, too, with dazzling consistency. It is no small irony that throughout the decades Salonga would be derided by his enemies as being too old and too frail to be able to carry out the tasks he set for himself. That was the case with his presidential bid in 1992. His enemies harped on his age and his wounds from Plaza Miranda, stoking fears of a president that would not be able to finish his term, or carry it out in relative physical and mental health.

In fact, it was Danding Cojuangco who fell ill during the campaign. And not long afterward, Mitra died from cancer. And as far as mental acuity was concerned, it wasn't too hard to see who began to suffer more from infirmities there, Salonga or his presidential rivals, Imelda, Miriam and Ramos. Since the elections, Salonga has written more books than all three combined. None of them by way of ghosts.

During the campaign itself, Salonga had a ready answer for those who tried to put him down on the issue of age. We are all made of flesh and blood, he said. We all grow old and die. The question is not how long a life you live, it is how good a life you live.

Salonga has had a pretty good life, walking proudly with both the great and the humble. Like Tañada, he has had a long life, though in his case doubly dramatically for it being a triumph over deathly, and deadly, adversity. Like Jose Diokno, Ninoy Aquino and Chino Roces, he is an exceptionally brilliant man who has used his intellectual gifts not in pursuit of personal gain but to serve the nation.

He has not used his gifts to take the easy path to power, he has used them to traverse the rough road of principle.

The very literal living symbol of wounded democracy, he was openly courted by Ferdinand Marcos before and after martial law to help make dictatorship attractive. He refused and spent his years, particularly after martial law, in quiet but fierce opposition to him.

The Senate president in 1991, and but a step away from the presidency, he knew that rejecting the US bases treaty would imperil his chances of being a resident of Malacañang. But he had seen enough of the harm that the bases could do. At the end of the day, standing 10 feet tall before the Senate, he declared: "The bases treaty is defeated."

After the elections, Salonga was wooed again by the presidents who subsequently came to power, who sought his advice and more importantly his stature to bolster their own. He could have gone into retirement, content that he had done his part in history, and written his memoirs. Instead he has remained in active service to his nation. Now in his 80s, he continues to write and talk and publish and engage in public affairs as head of Kilosbayan.

All of these engagements have one thing in common. It is that they have a moral vision stamped on them. Throughout his life and career, Salonga has striven to do the right thing. He has been a powerful moral force in national affairs. His is not a morality that demands fealty to ritual and piety—though he himself is a deeply religious man, harking steadfastly to the teachings of the Christian faith—his is a morality that calls for the practical discernment of right and wrong. His is a morality that does not seek refuge in the letter of the law—though he is not a bar topnotcher for nothing—his is a morality that demands the simple sway of justice.

In a country tossed and turned by the storms of greed and deceit, that can make anyone larger than life. No, not all politicians are liars and cheats.

Reflections on Pacquiao, Council of State

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

I AM NOT ABOUT TO JOIN THE BANDWAGON IN praise of Manny Pacquiao. The entire nation is rapturous over his devastating demolition of Mexican boxing legend Erik Morales. All the honors belong to Pacquiao. Everyone is coming on board, not lest the political elite, who would not be left behind in basking in the limelight of his triumph.

President Macapagal-Arroyo made quick political capital of Pacquiao's triumph. Paying tribute to Pacquiao, she said he was her "inspiration" in governance. She identified with Pacquiao, saying he "rose from defeat with a sharper mind, and a stronger body and will to win. That is why he is the true people's champion in this time of challenges and opportunity."

Not to be outdone, the Senate, hotbed of senatorial conspiracies against the regime, produced a raft of proposed resolutions acclaiming Pacquiao's victory. One authored by Sen. Francis Pangilinan said the boxer played "an inspirational role ... in a nation troubled by political and economic upheavals."

In a rare demonstration of national unity, the ring triumph touched off an explosion of national pride in a country that has long been starved of economic achievements and political stability.

If we reflect more closely on it, Pacquiao's victory is more an individual's triumph over adversity rather than a national triumph. He did it alone to avenge a defeat and humiliation at the hands of Morales months ago. True, the burden of redeeming national honor was a crushing weight on his shoulders as he climbed into the ring. However, we can safely assume that national acclaim was farthest from his mind; survival in a brutal sport was the foremost consideration. Going down to fundamentals, the fight was about either you or I, not about the flag.

There is nothing more striking in contrast as the Council of State meeting yesterday, which was a picture of national disunity and elite disharmony. Matters of state tear the nation apart. You can't bring the elite together under one mediating institution, such as the Council of State, without their unsheathing their bladed weapons.

When Pacquiao nursed his humiliation following his defeat at the hands of Morales last year, he suffered alone. The squabbling elite did not share Pacquiao's agony.

Pacquiao is the epitome of the individual success of millions of anonymous Filipinos who have staked their future in opportunities abroad, trying to overcome the disadvantages of minority migrants, the loneliness of isolation from the homeland and separation from families.

Pacquiao scored his triumph in a foreign land. Filipinos do best fighting the odds, as individuals and not as a nation, in foreign climes. This is the case of the more than 9 million overseas Filipino workers who keep the Philippine economy afloat with their remittances averaging $1 billion a month. Each of them is an example of individual economic success created out of honest and productive labor.

Filipinos are no different from other peoples in their patriotic outburst when celebrating successes in the athletic field. However, we have fewer successes than other countries, so when they come, they are a cause for national celebration.

Since developing nations have been left behind in the race for economic development by the rich countries, their national pride is bolstered not by their GDPs, their political stability, their governance and corruption indices. Thus, the athletic field becomes the equalizer. Thus, developing nations find in their athletes the repository of national pride after they have run out of revolutionary heroes in the struggle for independence. Thus, while the economic and political record of Latin American countries—such as Argentina and Brazil—is something they cannot crow about, they have rested their claim to fame as world powers in soccer because of Pelé (for Brazil) and Diego Maradona (for Argentina).

The attempt of the Filipino political elite to hold the Pacquiao success as an inspiration of governance is inappropriate. Boxing is an individual sport. It has nothing to do with governance. Athletic success is a powerful propaganda tool. But it also has a powerful backfire. There are plenty of lessons.

Hitler used the 1936 Berlin Olympics to project Nazi Germany's athletic and military prowess. But the propaganda of the superiority of the Aryan race and of totalitarian dictatorship over democracy was upended by a black man, Jesse Owens. Owens broke the world record for the 100 meter dash, among other athletic feats he achieved, to the extreme embarrassment of the Nazis.

Another black man punctured the Nazi propaganda when Joe Louis battered Max Schmeling in a devastating first round knockout in their 1938 rematch for the world heavyweight crown. The fight had worldwide ideological implications. It was held amid fears of a Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia. Schmeling was depicted as the symbol of Aryan racial superiority. A publicist in Schmeling's retinue was reported to have said that a black man could not defeat Schmeling.

The New York Times reported that President Franklin D. Roosevelt told Louis, "Joe, we need muscles like yours to beat Germany." In his biography, Louis wrote, "I knew I had to get Schmeling good. I had my own personal reasons and the whole damned country was depending on me."

In his memoirs, Schmeling wrote. "A victory over Jose Louis would perhaps have made me into the toast of the Third Reich."

Pacquiao cannot be the toast of any administration.

Why women (still) die from cancer

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

JANUARY IS CANCER AWARENESS MONTH, SO it still isn't too late to be writing about cancers that affect—and kill—women.

The two most common cancers that afflict Filipino women are breast cancer and cervical cancer. The Philippines reports the highest incidence of breast cancer in all of Asia. Breast cancer is the most common reproductive cancer in the country. Cervical cancer, however, kills more women than does breast cancer.

This, despite the fact that cervical cancer is easily detectable and extremely manageable, especially when detected in its early stages. Consider the incidence of cervical cancer in developed countries, such as in Japan, at 13.2 per 100,000 women, and in Denmark, at 15.9. Cervical cancer incidence here, on the other hand, is pegged at around 22.9.

What accounts for the difference? Lawyer Rhodora Raterta, executive director of the Family Planning Organization of the Philippines (FPOP) and secretary general of the Reproductive Health Advocacy Network (RHAN), pins the blame on inadequate reproductive health care services and information. "As early as 10 years ago in the 1995 World Conference on Women in Beijing, the right to reproductive health, the right to education as well as (the problem of) poverty, were already identified among the 12 critical areas for the advancement of women's human rights. Indeed, the linkage of poverty and underdevelopment to women's health, well-being and their very right to life... is evident."

Doctors and public health experts say that the primary reason so many women continue to die from cervical cancer is that over two-thirds of cases are diagnosed when they are already in the advanced stages.

* * *

THE MOST common diagnostic tool for cervical cancer worldwide is the pap smear, which is relatively cheap (compared to other procedures) and simple to perform. But because it requires the analysis of cells scraped from the cervix by a qualified lab technician, it still presents problems by way of costs and logistics.

In 2000, the DOH introduced the Acid Wash method, which uses the readily available acetic acid (found in household vinegar) as an alternative to the pap smear. Because lesions, the first signs of pre-cancerous cells in the cervix, turn white when the cervix is smeared with the acid, the doctor or health personnel can simply use visual observation to determine if the woman needs further testing with a pap smear or even colposcopy, if necessary.

According to RHAN, the test is not only cheaper but also less invasive and has a high sensitivity rate at 51-77 percent.

"Yet, simple and effective as the alternative test is, women often do not have enough information to even get tested," RHAN notes. Any woman who has had sex, especially those who initiated sexual activity early in life, or have or have had multiple partners or partners who have or have had multiple partners, are at high risk of developing cervical cancer (through HPV or human papilloma virus infection) and should get tested regularly.

RHAN sounds the alarm regarding the health risks for women at a time "when religious biases run high within a supposed secular government and an exclusively Natural Family Planning (NFP) program has replaced sound reproductive health policy." Filipino women, says the Network, "face an even greater risk in the absence of available information and health care."

* * *

ONE woman who waged a valiant battle against cancer was my cousin-in-law, Rose Braganza, wife of my first cousin Dr. Butch Braganza of Paramus, New Jersey.

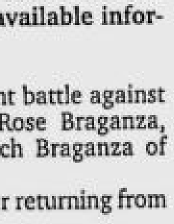
About four years ago, soon after returning from a visit to Manila, Rose went for a routine medical where she was diagnosed with breast cancer. Rose decided to actively seek a cure, receiving treatment at the Sloan-Kettering Memorial Center in New York and, in the last months of her struggle, even relocating temporarily to Manila so she could take part in an experimental cancer treatment making use of her own stem cells. Rose was fortunate that she had the financial wherewithal to seek whatever form of treatment held out hope, but even then, there was no second-guessing the hand of fate or the will of God.

What we choose to remember most about Rose, though, is the grace and good humor with which she faced her disease. A campus beauty who had been a runner-up in the prestigious "Miss Magnolia" search, she remained a looker, with a ready smile and easy laughter, up till the last time we saw her, which was around the middle of last year.

At that time, she had called a meeting of her Manila-based cousins and friends to see how we could all join forces to set up a support group for cancer survivors seeking treatment at the Medical City in Pasig. In a letter she wrote to the hospital management, she noted how, in the months she was going for chemotherapy and radiation treatment, the women she encountered during her long vigil seemed the embodiment of hopelessness and helplessness. Doctors and management personnel of Medical City, when we met with them, seemed very gung-ho about the possibility of setting up a support group, and I understand they are only waiting for the completion of facilities before establishing the support group. I only hope this happens soon, for this would be the perfect "memorial" for a brave and beautiful woman.

Rose is survived by her husband Butch, her children Michael and Michelle, her parents Mr. and Mrs. Conrado Oliveros ("Papa Baby" and "Mama Coco"), her brother Hector, in-laws, nephews and nieces. Members of the Braganza and Oliveros families, as well as Butch and Rose's friends, are invited to the observance of the Ninth Day of Prayers for Rose at our Jimenez "headquarters" on Annapolis Street in Cubao on Sunday, Jan. 29 at 7 p.m. Interment will be in San Francisco, California.

Who was Madame de Block?



LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

THIS SEEMS TO BE TERM-PAPER SEASON because my e-mail is filled with queries from students who obviously have not gone over the materials available in their school libraries. If the questions concern Philippine history, I don't mind, but when they ask about other topics, like the topography of the brain, or the history of early Hungarian cabinet making, I usually tell them, *"Hindi po ako si* Ernie Baron." Now Mr. Baron is gone, and I will have no one to pass impertinent questions to.

One of the things I notice from most student work these days is that there is very little library research being undertaken. Most students take the easy way out by searching the Internet, which is seemingly a limitless source of information, but one cannot be sure of the materials one picks up from Cyberspace. Furthermore, there is a big difference between materials found in a good library and those found on the Internet. For Rizal alone, there are so many different books available on all aspects of his life that should be more than enough to come up with a decent paper. What alarms me is that students are not encouraged to take an extra step by reading Rizal's own writings. To think that we have 25 volumes of his compiled works readily available in the original Spanish or translated into English, Filipino and major Philippine languages.

One of the ways to appreciate the national hero is to go over his correspondence. The letters to his family are particularly engaging because here he is not playing the role of scholar, novelist, propagandist, etc. In letters to his family, he becomes like you and me.

His journals are even more absorbing, because he is writing basically for himself. We can assume that when we read these stray bits of memory and history, it is the closest we can get to knowing him. Of course, one can argue that he purposely left these journals for future historians to read, thus the question always on my mind is, what did he delete from his journals, what papers did he destroy? That we will never know.

That Rizal had a novelist's eye for detail and character is evident in his diaries. In one manuscript written from Oct. 18 to Nov. 20, 1891, Rizal described a long sea trip he made from Marseille to Hong Kong. Rizal gave up poetry when he left the Ateneo, but sometimes the muse intrudes into his prose. He was not a good traveler and often complained about getting seasick but the beginning of this trip was described thus:

"When we left Marseille, it was a beautiful afternoon. The sun hid among scarlet and gold clouds. A few moments afterwards, the moon like a sphere, round and pure, rose from the sea. The sea is beautiful and if the whole voyage continues like this, we shall have a lovely voyage."

While one would think Rizal would be talking about himself and his experiences in this journal, you will be surprised to find that he was actually writing down notes about other people on board:

"Twelve missionaries, Italian and French, are going to Tonkin. With them was a bishop called Volenteri. He is small, dry, and has a goatee and moustache like a Chinese. The wife and children of the lieutenant governor of Saigon, Mr. Daniel are also with us. She puts on airs... The oldest son is friendly to me. With us is a teacher who seems to know very little.

"A handsome woman, well-painted, with the look of an actress, Madame de Block is attracting attention for her beauty. They say she is traveling for a scientific mission. We shall see.

"A Japanese who has lived ten years in Europe whose name is Matsui is returning to his country. In addition, with us, are two Egyptians; the young one is insolent and takes liberties. At the table he thought he could win against me in chess and game of draughts, but I gave him a tremendous beating."

With such skill in observation, it is little wonder he made a good novelist.

National Museum director Corazon Alvina, who has likewise read these letters and journals, describes Rizal as *chismoso*. The day after they left Marseilles, he saw Madame de Block in a white dress and noted that people started "to bet on how many dresses she has." In a later entry, he wrote, "The lady has changed her toilette and wears a lace collar it is believed that the Russian admiral has brought her. Two women were talking ill of him, saying that he had left his wife and daughter in order to travel with her. It was obvious that she was painted the first day. The lady in question has Greek features: straight nose, narrow and low forehead, big eyes. The mouth is too big."

We will never know who this woman was and why Rizal was so fascinated with her. A week into the voyage, Rizal noted that "the dresses of the woman are getting fewer." (Did that mean that she started to put on clothes she had worn before?) This lady attracted Rizal because of the mystery that shrouded her. Was she really a scientist or was she just the mistress of some important person? From what Rizal gathered, she was going to India, to study the women of India. She was said to speak six languages and to be the correspondent of many scientific societies. Rizal even observed the lady hypnotizing other passengers.

Who was she? Did Rizal get to know her better? Now that is a fascinating topic for a term paper.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Doc L

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

THE PHILIPPINES LOST A GREAT NATIONAL SCIENTIST last month when Dr. Alfredo V. Lagmay passed away at the age of 86.

We know too little about our National Scientists and National Artists, so I thought I should write about "Doc L," as he came to be affectionately known.

Even among those who are aware that we have National Scientists, there's a tendency to think of them as people in white gowns, conducting experiments in laboratories. To some extent, Doc L did come from that world. He did his doctorate in psychology at Harvard University, training with B. F. Skinner, the "father" of behaviorist psychology, which meant animal experiments to understand the process of conditioning and reinforcement.

Renaissance man

But there was more to Doc L than laboratories. At a memorial service organized for him by the University of the Philippines College of Social Sciences and Philosophy, his colleagues and former students, many now eminent professors themselves, stood up to describe the Doc L they knew.

The picture was one of Doc L, the renaissance man. He was not just a psychologist but also a philosopher, and later I will describe an anthropological side to him that few people were aware of. He did laboratory experiments, but he was just as interested in counseling, particularly the kind of client-centered humanist counseling developed by Carl Rogers.

He taught philosophy even while heading the psychology department, and produced articles with titles like "Siddharta and Science," which looked into the phenomenon of alpha waves being produced in our brain during meditation.

And even as he built up the psychology department into a world-class institution, he was always concerned about how psychology could become more relevant to the Philippines. He wondered about the validity of imported psychology tests and eventually developed a Philippine Thematic Apperception Test, where you assess a person's personality by asking them to interpret pictures.

All this from a man with very humble beginnings. His father had migrated to Manila from Ilocos and was a worker in a gas company. Doc L studied in public schools and excelled, making it to UP, where he wanted to study medicine. He thought of psychology as a pre-med degree but before he could start, the war broke out. After the war, he tried again to start in psychology but there were no teachers to handle the program so he did philosophy instead, graduating cum laude in 1947.

He taught philosophy at UP while working on an MA in that field. The masteral degree was conferred in 1951, in absentia because by that time Doc L had received a scholarship to do a Ph.D. in Harvard. The Ph.D. in experimental psychology was awarded in 1955.

He returned to the Philippines and married Leticia Amante shortly after. (Oh, if someone could write about the love stories of our professors!) His wife eventually taught in the anthropology department, so she was "Ma'am Lagmay" to us. They have seven children, all of whom are now professionals.

I marvel at how Doc L and Ma'am Lagmay raised their family while serving the university, and the nation. Remember how Doc L couldn't take psychology because there were no teachers? When he came back to UP in 1955, he began to build up the department, heading it until 1977. Today, the department is one of the largest in the university with rigorous programs in different fields, from clinical psychology to Sikolohiyang Pilipino.

Ma'am Lagmay, on the other hand, was able to find time to teach anthropology and work on her own Ph.D. Her research is still considered a classic, with its focus on child-rearing practices in Krus na Ligas, a community within the university.

Yabu

I received my social science training outside the Philippines, so I never had the privilege of taking classes with Doc L. When I joined UP Diliman's anthropology department, he had already retired, but I was to hear about him often from Ma'am Lagmay. She idolized her husband and was always talking about him, referring to him constantly as "Yabu." From her descriptions, I imagined Yabu to be a big man, literally and figuratively.

I finally met Doc L one day when he passed by the department to pick up his wife. I was startled for he was the most gentle and amiable person you could imagine. Even after the government designated him as a National Scientist in 1988, he remained terribly unassuming.

Those of us in the anthropology department were privileged to see still another side to Doc L. Whenever he passed by, he'd take time to engage faculty members in talk about families, the university, the country. After I began my "Pinoy Kasi" column in 1997, he'd come in with comments about articles he had read. They were many, of course, sometimes coming from Doc L, the psychologist, at other times, Doc L, the philosopher, and occasionally, Doc L, the adopted anthropologist.

Arriving

One of his best articles disputes the way *"bahala na"* is equated to fatalism. Written in 1977, the article wisely points out that *"bahala na"* is actually a "functionally positive response to uncertainty," a way for Filipinos to take action even while preparing themselves for the worst. What struck me was the way he called for more research looking into "culture bearers," understanding people's own descriptions of their feelings.

Not surprisingly, in 1984, he received a Distinguished Service Award from the International Association of Anthropological Diplomacy.

Doc L made a good anthropologist because he was so concerned with social issues. One of his last articles, written in 1993, was entitled "Discipline, Culture and Information Systems," and it started out with a lament: "The national crisis seems to have grown to unmanageable proportions: an entire culture is at bay." He was hopeful though, about how the emerging information technologies might help to instill discipline in society. I wonder, if he had lived several more years, how he would have assessed the information technologies' impact on the nation.

There was one particular topic he kept referring to whenever we'd meet: the Filipino notion of *"dating."* It's to arrive and more, he kept reminding me. Several times he'd assert: "It's a key to Filipino culture. Think about it and write something."

I haven't quite gotten around to writing about *dating*, but every time I hear the word, which is often (from students from people out in the streets), I remember Doc L.

When I arrived at his memorial service and went up t Ma'am Lagmay, she held my hand tightly and whispered, " want my friend back." And it occurred to me, this man had touched so many lives in many ways, a professor to some, colleague to others, but a friend to all.

Doc L had that "arrive," and I still owe him one column.

Poor schoolboy who dreamed and caught the biggest star

I WISH TO CONGRATULATE Artemio Panganiban for being appointed Supreme Court chief justice.

In March 1991, during the Recognition Day Program at Juan Luna Elementary School, where pupils, teachers and parents were honored for their exemplary behavior and outstanding accomplishments, Panganiban was the guest of honor. I was then the principal of the school.

Despite a very busy schedule, Panganiban accepted our invitation because he said that it was a rare opportunity for him to be "back home." He was very frank and honest about his humble beginnings. He shared his experiences and related the hardships he went through as a working student: he sold newspapers and cigarettes. He went around Sampaloc and Quiapo shining shoes. Still, he managed to always stay at the top of his class.

"I did not allow my fears and our family's poverty to stop me from dreaming and achieving something," he told us then.

His words come to my mind. They can truly inspire many others who are of school age—who live in pushcarts or sleep in cardboard-padded floors, sell *balut* until midnight, watch and wash cars, drive pedicabs, stare at passersby, scour for food in garbage cans, etc.

Because that newsboy, a product of the public school system, became INQUIRER president and is now a father to five children who have graduated from "esteemed universities in the United States."

"I see my appointment as chief justice as an opportunity to be of even greater service to God and country...work to safeguard the liberty of our people and to nurture their prosperity while upholding the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary." (PDI 12/21/05) Again, my congratulations to that schoolboy who dreamed of small things, stretched out his hand to reach for the stars and caught the biggest one.

—VILMA REGIDOR TAROY,
33 Viceroy St.,
Fairview, Quezon City

Police should watch out for 'criminals on wheels'

FOR QUITE SOME TIME NOW, this armchair cop has noticed that a growing number of killings are being carried out by men riding on motorcycles. The murder of Judge Henrick Gingoyon is the latest in a growing list committed by these "criminals on wheels."

To cite a few other cases:

1. Aug. 4, 2005: Two motorcycle-riding men shot and killed a former bank employee and seriously wounded his companion minutes after parking their car in front of the Folk Arts Theater.

2. Aug. 16, 2005: Two gunmen on a motorcycle killed a pharmacist and his driver on E. Santos Street, Barangay Concepcion Uno, Pasig City.

3. (Reported on Oct. 16, 2005): Two motorcycle-riding robbers shot and killed a collector of the Sarangani Rural Bank of General Santos.

4. Nov. 4, 2005: Five armed men arriving on two motorcycles shot and killed a barangay chair having a snack with a friend in Caloocan City.

5. Dec. 6, 2005: Two motorcycle-riding armed men shot dead a 43-year-old militant leader in Barangay Gabon, Abucay, Bataan.

6. Dec. 14, 2005: Two motorcycle-riding gunmen killed a police helper on his way back to the police station from the market.

I hope the PNP has taken note of this mode the bad guys are using in going about their deadly activities these days. If I may suggest, the police should consider forming special teams just to watch out for men riding in tandem on big bikes.

I often take public transport, and I see a lot of messenger types riding solo. They're probably on legitimate business. But I also see men riding in tandem on a motorcycle and I wonder if they're on the road on official business or out casing some bank, pawnshop, fast food or convenience store, or the office of a potential victim. They wear rugged street clothes and that mean, unkempt look that give one the feeling they are up to no good. I guess the challenge for the police is how to tell the bad guys from the good.

One thing I think the police should do is watch out for those characters who seem to be just riding around suspiciously as if staking a place, or looking for a quarry. They should flag them down for the slightest traffic violation (no helmets, beating the red light, no license plate, etc.). That's a good enough reason to frisk them for guns and other deadly weapons.

These bad guys on wheels should be stopped before they kill more innocent and helpless citizens.

—FRANK LACAMBRA,
franklacambra@gmail.com

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LETTERS PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Don't look, do something

I LEARNED FROM THE INQUIRER's Jan. 14 editorial titled "Pep talk," that Budget Secretary Romulo Neri has disputed the Social Weather Stations' survey finding which showed that 16.7 percent of Filipino households experienced hunger in the last quarter of 2005.

I don't mind him disputing this if he can show data that will disprove the SWS' survey result. The 4.9 percent economic growth is nowhere near to being good enough to put food on every poor man's table. And I agree with Senator Mar Roxas: a 4.9 percent growth is not that good because its effect is not felt by the majority.

In the last quarter of 2005, the economy appeared to have picked up, thanks to the bigger influx of dollar remittances from OFWs and the effects of the expanded value-added tax, among others. But did we realize that those families relying on dollar remittances received much less than what they used to because the peso had gone stronger, bringing down the peso-dollar exchange rate from P56:$1 to just P52:$1? Add this to the new EVAT impact, and it will be easier for one to understand why families went hungry last quarter.

I hope the government will be sincere in implementing genuine economic reforms by thinking of the plight of the poor. Rather than increase the EVAT from 10 percent to 12 percent, may I suggest that the government improve its tax collection. If the government had been strict enough in enforcing our tax laws, there might not have been any need to amend the old VAT law.

I used to work in a company importing premium brands of wines and spirits, and I was appalled when I learned that 80 percent of the imported liquor was being brought in via the back door, to avoid taxes. This has been going on for years and the number of goods being brought in has been increasing, especially now that Filipinos are beginning to enjoy the taste of vodka and bourbon.

Let us first think of the poor and do something to make their lives much better. We can have the pep talk much later.

—BOBBY TABLIZO,
robert.tablizo@yahoo.com.ph

NEA's CMT additional burden to electric cooperatives' members

IT HAS COME TO OUR ATTENTION that the National Electrification Administration has formed a Change Management Team (CMT) which will take over the management of electric cooperatives (ECs) found to be poorly, if not utterly, mismanaged. In reality, however, this will lead to an ill-disguised management contract between the CMT and EC. We find this scheme in violation of existing laws.

The relevant law (PD 269, as amended by PD 1645), which gives the NEA the power to control and supervise the EC, authorizes the NEA to designate an acting general manager and/or project supervisor in two instances, namely: (1) when the position becomes vacant; and (2) when the interest of the EC and the program so requires.

The relevant law does not authorize the formation of a CMT. The CMT's existence is therefore not only illegal; worse, it will cause a serious drain on the coffers of the EC concerned, since the cost of the management contract will be borne by the EC. Worst of all, the EC member-owners, who will shoulder the cost of operations of the EC, will have no protection from contracts that may eventually prove to be disadvantageous to them since they cannot sue the CMT because it has no legal personality under the law.

Thus, it is about time that the national government or even Congress looked into the powers of the NEA and how it exercises its power of control and supervision over the 114 electric cooperatives in the country, Simple questions will help determine whether the more than 30-year existence of NEA has served the best interest of the consumers, in light of the ECs' almost P19-billion debts which have been either condoned or assumed by the government: (1) Do the ECs now have better financial and technical capability to compete once open access and retail competition is implemented? (2) Were the EC official, found to have mismanaged their ECs, charged and penalized?

If the answers to these two questions are in the negative, then it is about time that the NEA be abolished and its functions given to the Department of Energy. The Filipino taxpayers deserve some relief after years and years of subsidizing an inefficient agency.

—PETE L. ILAGAN,
president,
National Association of Electricity
Consumers for Reforms,
10 Bayside Court Compound,
680 Quirino Ave., Tambo,
Parañaque City

Help mend this broken nation

THIS IS IN RESPONSE TO THE Dec. 2, 2005 front-page article titled "GMA is usual suspect behind cheating raps" by Norman Bordadora.

The statements of Wilson Fortaleza, president of Sanlakas, and Carol Araullo, chair of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan—insinuating that Thai Premier Thaksin Shinawatra's accusations of cheating in the Southeast Asian Games were merely fueled by the international community's perceived doubt over the legitimacy of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's presidency—were totally uncalled for and so insulting for our local athletes who worked hard to give glory to our country. Their accusations were highly characteristic of the opposition, and again they showed their true colors. They'd use every opportunity to discredit GMA.

Their statements clearly could only have promoted complacency and indifference among Filipino workers, athletes, leaders, students, teachers and anyone else: Why would they work hard and strive for excellence in whatever they do when they would just be doubted anyway? No wonder our country remains in the jaws of poverty and unending crises.

I watched the 2005 SEA Games closely and basked in the glory of champion athletes whenever a gold was earned. I have never been so proud of the Filipino athlete. Casting doubt on the legitimacy of the Filipino athletes' gold haul in the SEA Games was just too much.

I appeal to the opposition: Spare our athletes and the Filipino nation from your incessant, careless and mindless politicking. Our athletes deserve something better and so do our people. Any act of cheating would have been obvious on TV. Besides, weren't there other international sports officials whose services were engaged precisely to prevent any wrongdoing?

I have been a teacher for two years now in one of the exclusive schools here in Antipolo City. From my experience, it is so hard for a teacher to restore confidence and sense of national pride and patriotism among our students amid all the economic crisis and political bickering. Why can't our leaders and politicians give the Filipinos a chance at optimism and pride? Please, we deserve something better than dirty politics. It is high time for the opposition to say and do something positive so as to restore our nation to its glory days. "Help build!" This is every Filipino's challenge. We are so broken already.

—VINCE VICENTUAN,
vinzvice@yahoo.com

Courting the critics

COMMENTARY

Ismael G. Khan Jr.

ONE OF THE JOYS OF LIVING IN A DEMOcratic society is the freedom to express one's opinion, right or wrong. With the proliferation of "letters to the editors," widely read Opinion columnists and social pundits who expound on just about everything, the lines which separate reality from fiction, or truth from perception, easily gets blurred. Political apparatchiks and PR spinmeisters have become experts in packaging innuendoes and half-truths, which are then passed off as facts to an unwary public whose sympathies and prejudices are thereby exploited through misinformation and disinformation.

The Supreme Court has not been spared from such unjustified criticisms. The unfairness of it all is especially unfortunate because the justices do not and will not talk back. For instance, many have concluded that the Supreme Court has abdicated its independence to favor the administration. This impression is based on the fallacious argument that 11 of its sitting justices are all appointees of President Macapagal-Arroyo (12, if one includes Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban).

It truly disappoints when even retired Supreme Court Justice Isagani Cruz has concluded that "Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has so far never lost a case before the highest tribunal and it is not unlikely that her record will remain unbroken." (PDI, 1/7/06) This statement is inaccurate, to put it mildly. In fact, the Supreme Court ruled that Fernando Poe Jr. was a natural-born citizen, thus enabling him to run against her. Just a few weeks ago, the Supreme Court ordered the government to pay more than P3 billion to Piatco before it could take over the spanking new Naia 3 airport. On the Mining Act decision, Justices Antonio Carpio, Conchita Carpio-Morales and Romeo Callejo Sr.—all GMA appointees—dissented from the majority who upheld its constitutionality. So did Justices Renato Corona, Adolfo Azcuna, Dante Tinga and Cancio Garcia who partially dissented on the more recent 2005 EVAT law. All this just goes to show that Supreme Court justices are their own men and women, beholden to no one, as they have always been since the time that Justice Cruz himself sat on the Court when its entire membership owed their appointment to President Cory Aquino.

As a revered former justice who served the Supreme Court for more than eight years, Justice Cruz's comments certainly deserve to be listened to and heeded. The weight of his authority in shaping popular perceptions about the Court and its members, however, imposes on him an equally heavier burden to be more circumspect in his observations. He has not always been so, judging from his latest columns about the Court—"Supreme Court loquacity" (PDI, 8/27/05) and "Criticism of the courts" (PDI, 11/5/05).

Surely, Justice Cruz has disappointed his brethren by being less than a constructive critic.

In his Jan. 7 column, Justice Cruz scored "the associate justices whose pace in deciding their own assignments cannot be described as speedy." One reason, of course, is that the present Court's workload has grown much heavier since the time of Justice Cruz. There are currently about 6,000 pending cases divided among the present 14 justices. In addition, each of them receives an average of 25 new cases per month. To unclog their dockets, each justice must dispose of at least 30 cases every month.

On the case dismissing the second impeachment complaint against then Chief Justice Hilario Davide, Justice Cruz stated incorrectly that Justices Jose Vitug, Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez, Renato Corona and Adolfo Azcuna "voted to grant the petitions, and in effect dissented from the majority view." In fact, they joined the majority. Incidentally, the title of that landmark decision is Francisco vs. The House of Representatives—not the Nagmamalasakit na mga Manananggol ng mga Manggagawang Pilipino, Inc. It is this same case that Justice Cruz has decried for its "loquacity." It is to be emphasized, however, that the length of a decision is dictated by the number, novelty and complexity of the issues to be resolved. This case, as well as the many separate opinions promulgated with it, dealt with the intricate questions of legal standing, ripeness and the delicate issue pertaining to a judicial review of the House rules in impeachment proceedings. Lest it be forgotten, the justices devoted two straight days hearing oral arguments on the 18 petitions involved. The justices who wrote separate concurring opinions did so out of a sincere conviction that there was a need to do so rather than a need to "impress." Note that then Justice Panganiban initially inhibited himself because one of the petitioners was Jovito Salonga, his acknowledged "guru" and former law partner. But the Court directed him to participate in view of the novel and transcendental constitutional questions confronting it.

It is a bit off-putting when Justice Cruz begrudges the magistrates' right to articulate their convictions. As he himself admitted, he wrote a lengthy concurring opinion to "further exalt religious freedom." I certainly welcome the literary flourishes with which Justice Cruz embellished his own ponencias. As the lead paragraph from his 1986 ponencia in Mang-oy vs. Court of Appeals (144 SCRA 34) illustrates, there should be room for an individual justice's style, if only to emphasize that jurisprudential prose need not be dry and prosaic.

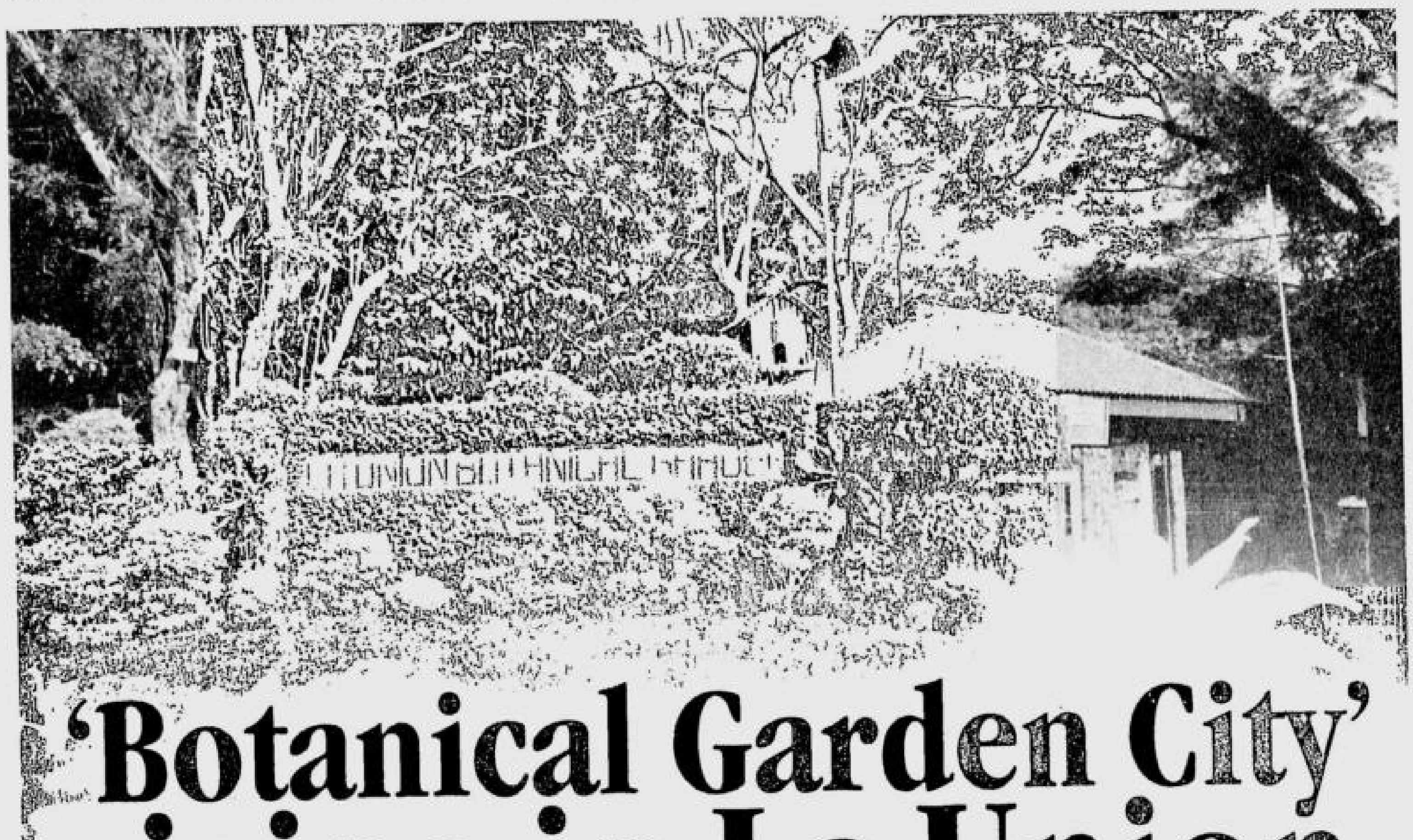
We are back in the early 1900s in the cool regions of the Mountain Province, setting many legends of adventure and romance among the highlanders of the North. Our story is not as fanciful, involving as it does not a rivalry for the hand of a beautiful Igorot maiden but a prosaic dispute over a piece of land. Even so, as in those tales of old, the issue shall be decided in favor of the just and deserving, albeit according to the dictates not of the heart but of the law.

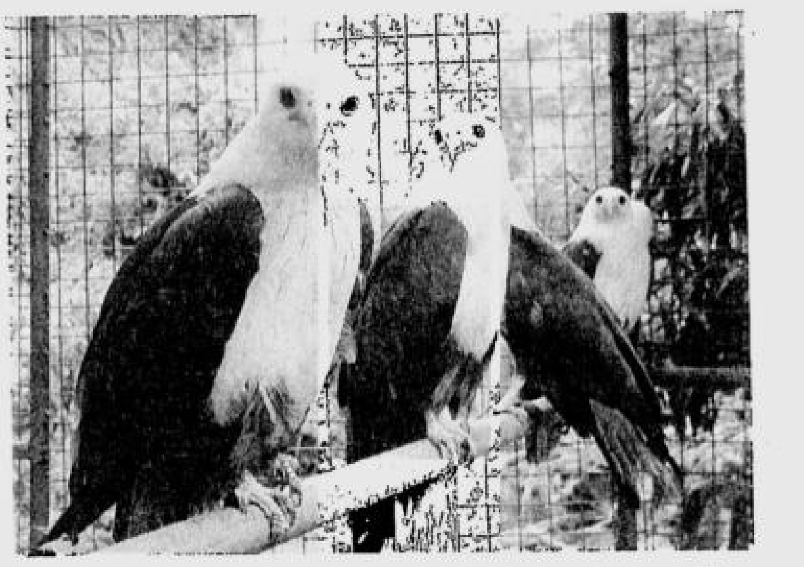
Ismael G. Khan Jr., is deputy court administrator and chief of the Supreme Court's Public Information Office.

E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph

INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez





MAYOR Mary Jane Ortega's dream aviary.

THE La Union Botanical Garden has become San Fernando City's center of attraction in La Union, offering ecological tours and field trips.

PHOTOS BY TOOTS SOBERANO

'Botanical Garden City' rising in La Union

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
San Fernando City

SOMEWHERE IN SAN FERNANDO City in La Union is a not-so-secret garden teeming with thousands of species of forest and fruit-bearing trees, vines, shrubs, flowering plants, weeds and all sorts of vegetation.

Located 8 km from the city proper, the La Union Botanical Garden can be God's little corner in these parts—where His awesome creations are at their most beautiful but put up with a little help from people.

Mayor Mary Jane Ortega said the garden had become a focal point to develop San Fernando, the prime trading hub and education center in the Ilocos region, as the "Botanical Garden City" by 2010.

San Fernando has been identified by the Institute for Solidarity in Asia (ISA) as one of the best performing cities that adopted the public governance system (PGS).

The PGS is a performance measurement tool used to determine achievement of set goals within a given period. It encourages local administrations to operate under established mission, vision and set of values from the city government to the communities.

Ortega said the botanical garden must be nurtured and residents provided skills training to make San Fernando economically viable.

From zoo to garden

The garden was established in the early 1970s when a group of Japanese volunteers planted 1,500 mango trees in a denuded part of the city's forest, she said. The volunteers walked for an hour to reach the area.

In 1994, Ortega, then a college professor, dreamed of putting up a mini zoo to teach children to be kind to animals. "If you are kind to animals, you become kind to people. You develop a culture of kindness," she said.

But her husband, Victor (then a representative of La Union), turned down her proposal, citing meager budget and saying it was the least priority in his development program. "He said what were needed were livelihood [programs], infrastructures and the like," Ortega said.

But the mayor said her husband had a change of heart after attending an international conference on environment in Indonesia.

"He realized that the environment should be given priority and when he arrived from Indonesia, he was already enthusiastic about my project," Ortega recalled.

Sharing a vision

Things fell into place when a friend entered the picture with a dream similar to Ortega's.

Romualdo del Rosario, then chief of the National Museum's botany division, urged her to put up a botanical garden where the mini zoo would be housed.

"We had the area—a 10-hectare land where the mango trees stood, a funding of P5 million (P1 million a year for five years) from my husband's [congressional] budget, and a person to plan and manage the garden. We buckled down to work," Ortega said.

So transforming a forest—part of which had been planted by the Japanese volunteers with mango trees and part of which was denuded—into a botanical garden started.

Years of work led to the creation of a botanical facility featuring pocket gardens with various themes (palmery, evergreen, orchidarium), picnic grounds, a museum of natural history and extensive collection of flora, both local and imported.

Ecological tours

Visitors, many of them students, come for "eco-walks" (ecological tours), to study plants, to hike, hold picnics or simply enjoy the sights and sounds.

A favorite site for educational tours and field trips for city residents and visitors from nearby provinces, the place boasts of more than 700 plant species.

But the work is far from over.

In 2001, the provincial government donated the adjoining 10 hectares of land to the city that would also be transformed as part of the botanical garden.

The La Union Botanical Garden Foundation manages the facility while the city government funds its operations.

Twenty-three workers tend the garden but, according to Ortega, God also helps.

"There is this patch of beautiful pink flowers and I was told that its scientific name was *Clitoria ternatea*. Beside it was another patch of white flowers with spikes called penisitum. Then there's the *lantana* patch and the *sili* (chili)-like flowers and all around were butterflies. I asked the gardener who tended the area, and he said there was none because the plants were weeds. So I said God is the best gardener," Ortega said.

Research center

A botanical garden differs from an ordinary garden because the former is a center for research, she said.

"We have graduate students who studied mushrooms, herb species [for medical purposes], butterflies and others. All plants are labeled, including their scientific names. In a flowering garden, the plants are not labeled. But a botanical garden is also an area for recreation and a place for children to start learning to love [plants]," she said.

Ortega said she loved plants, a trait cultivated in her early childhood when her mother would tell her to crush carabao dung used to fertilize the rose garden and vegetable plants in the family's Quezon City house.

But she conceded that while she loved plants, "the feeling was not mutual" because the plants she bought would wilt or not bloom at all.

"I love the concept and I know the importance of [caring for the] environment," she said.

Ortega is the top critic of the botanical garden but does not meddle with its management.

She said her dream of also having an aviary has been fulfilled. The P5-P10 entrance fees are just enough to feed the birds, she said.

Japanese volunteer

Ortega said three years ago, Osamu Nakagaki, one of the Japanese volunteers, visited the city to check on the trees they planted.

Nakagaki thought he was going to walk for an hour to the area as he did 34 years ago, but he was surprised that the road was well-paved and the trees he planted were still standing amid the botanical garden, she said.

He was also elated to see that a Japanese garden was established and was dedicated to him and his friends.

Ortega said Nakagaki, then the country director of the Japan International Cooperation Agency, invited her to Japan to study their "one village, one product concept."

"Did you see the confluence of events? How could this happen without God's intervention?" she said of the Japanese volunteers planting the trees and the eventual visit of one of them more than three decades later.

Ortega said the city's vision for it to be the "Botanical Garden City" was fast becoming a reality as the city government and the residents realize the value of preserving the environment.

FAST FACTS

San Fernando was founded in 1759 in honor of King Ferdinand of Spain and was made provincial capital of La Union in 1850. It was converted into a component city on Feb. 13, 1998.

Population:
109,528 (2003)

Land area:
10,525 sq. km.

Number of villages: 59

Main economic activities:
Agriculture, tourism

Republic of the Philippines
Province of South Cotabato
Municipality of Lake Sebu

January 6, 2006

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Local Government Unit (LGU) of Lake Sebu through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder contract:

1. Name of Contract : Construction of Wet Market Building
Location : Poblacion, Lake Sebu, South Cotabato
Brief Description : Const. of 18mx36m bldg. with concrete flooring
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) : P3,200,000.00
Contract Duration : 120 Calendar day (C.D.)
2. Name of Contract : Construction of Public Terminal
Location : Poblacion, Lake Sebu, South Cotabato
Brief Description : Const. of 18mx36m with concrete flooring
A.B.C. : P2,000,000.00
Contract Duration : 90 C.D.
3. Name of Contract : Construction of Public Water System
Location : Poblacion, Lake Sebu, South Cotabato
Brief Description : Drilling and const. of concrete elevated water tank, pipe laying and installation of submersible pump
A.B.C. : P1,000,000.00
Contract Duration : 75 C.D.
4. Name of Contract : Construction of Pay Toilet
Location : Poblacion, Lake Sebu, South Cotabato
Brief Description : Construction of Toilet with 4 comfort rooms and 4 bathrooms
A.B.C. : P450,000.00
Contract Duration : 45 C.D.
5. Name of Contract : Construction of Eco-Park
Location : Poblacion, Lake Sebu, South Cotabato
Brief Description : T'boli house, pathwalk, animal cage, toilets, man-made falls
A.B.C. : P4,000,000.00
Contract Duration : 120 C.D.
6. Name of Contract : Fencing of Controlled Dumpsite
Location : Sitio Tebele, Poblacion, Lake Sebu, South Cotabato
Brief Description : Fencing with gate
A.B.C. : P500,000.00
Contract Duration : 60 C.D.
7. Name of Equipment : Purchase of 1 unit Dumptruck
Brief Description : 6 wheelers, Reconditioned
A.B.C. : P515,000.00
8. Name of Equipment : Conversion of Hino 55633 Dumptruck to Primemover
Brief Description : Conversion of Dumptruck to Primemover, Supply of genuine spareparts for repair of Dumptruck, supply and install of surplus Coupler Sadler assembly, supply surplus lowbed trailer.
A.B.C. : P1,965,000.00
9. Name of Equipment : Purchase of 1 unit Hydraulic Excavator (Crawler Type)
Brief Description : Brandnew
A.B.C. : P7,515,000.00

Prospective bidders possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment listed in the Eligibility forms available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use non discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR)

Schedules of Bids and Awads Committee (BAC) activities are as follows:

1 Receipt from prospective bidders of letter of intent (LOI) including application for eligibility	February 1, 2006
2 Issuance of Eligibility forms	February 1, 2006
3 Receipt of eligibility requirements	February 7, 2006
4 Notice of results of eligibility check	February 15, 2006
5 Issuance of Bid Documents	February 22, 2006
6 Pre-bid conference	February 22, 2006
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	March 1, 2006 @ 10:00 A.M

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders eligibility forms at Municipal Hall, upon their submission of LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable fee of P100.00 to the LGU Lake Sebu Municipal Treasurer. Prospective bidders shall submit the eligibility requirements at the said address. They may also obtain results of the eligibility check at the same address.

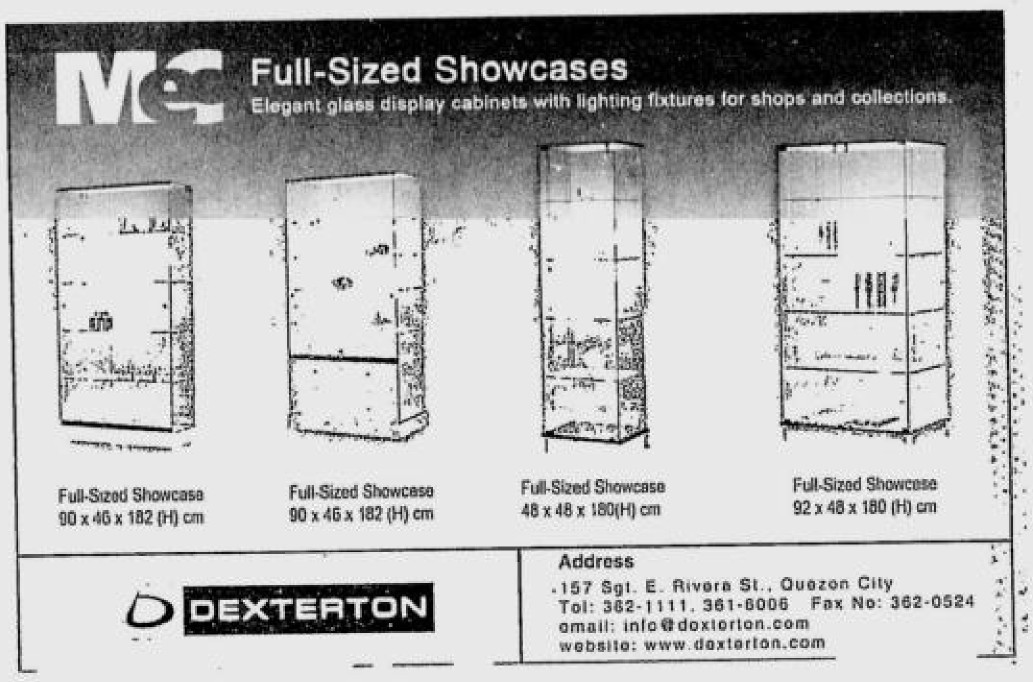
The BAC will issue bidding documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible upon payment of non-refundable amount of 1% of the items 1-6 to the LGU Lake Sebu Municipal Treasurer.

The LGU Lake Sebu assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses ocurred in the preparation of their bids.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) ENGR. TEODORO E. EMBOLTORIO
Municipal Engineer
BAC Chairman

(PDI–Jan. 18 & 25, 2006)



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PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

NOTICE TO THE DEPOSITORS OF THE CLOSED RURAL BANK OF 21st CENTURY (BALAGTAS), INC.

1. Pursuant to Monetary Board Resolution No. 79 dated January 19, 2006 ordering the closure of the Rural Bank of 21st Century (Balagtas), Inc. (RBCI), the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) will start its operations for the servicing of claims for insured deposits in the closed RBCI on Wednesday, January 25, 2006.
2. Depositors are requested to proceed directly to the following payout sites where they can file their claims with the PDIC representatives during office hours (8:00 AM to 5:00 PM), from Monday to Friday, except holidays.

RBCI Office/Branch	*Payout Site/ Address*	*Duration of Initial Operations*
Balagtas (Head Office)	Km. 29, San Juan, Balagtas, Bulacan	Jan. 25, 2006 to Feb. 3, 2006
Bulacan Branch	Bagumbayan, Bulacan, Bulacan	Jan. 25, 2006 to Feb.3, 2006
Bocaue Branch	Binang II, Bocaue, Bulacan	Jan. 25, 2006 to Feb. 3, 2006
Meycauayan Branch	Sto. Niño, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Jan. 25, 2006 to Feb. 10, 2006

After the said date, all depositors can file their claims personally at the PDIC Claims Counter, 6th Floor, SSS BLDG, Ayala Avenue corner V.A. Rufino St., Makati City from Monday to Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. or by mail to:

The Manager
Claims Processing Department
Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation
2228 Chino Roces Avenue
1231 Makati City

3. Depositors are advised to present the following requirements to the PDIC representatives when filing their claims:
   a. Original evidence of deposit such as Savings Passbook, Certificate of Time Deposit, or Bank Statement including Unused Checks.
   b. Two (2) latest valid identification cards/documents (IDs) with depositor's signature.

Other documents may be required by the PDIC representatives in the course of their processing of claims filed.

4. Pursuant to the provision of R.A. 3591, as amended by R.A. 9302, the last day for filing claims for insured deposits in the closed Rural Bank of 21st Century (Balagtas), Inc., is on January 21, 2008. After January 21, 2008, PDIC, as insurer, shall no longer accept any claim for insured deposits maintained with the said closed bank.

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

(PDI- January 25; February 1 & 8, 2006)

NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU
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Text us your feedback: inquirer atn name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart) *Assistant Editor* **Tony Bergonia**

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Visayas, Mindanao lotto outlets take own jackpot: Record sales

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—THE P150 MILLION pot that Sunday's lotto draw offered apparently brought more people lining up to place their bets in government-licensed outlets in the Visayas and Mindanao.

Unfortunately, they all lost to the unidentified bettor in Daet, Camarines Norte who became a new multimillionaire, said the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO).

The good news, however, was that 16 persons in the Visayas and Mindanao got the five numbers in the six-digit winning combination 18, 11, 41, 43, 06 and 47.

Each of them would get P28,000, said William Medici, PCSO Visayas-Mindanao (Vismin) manager.

Medici said more people were encouraged to buy the Super Lotto 6/49 tickets on Sunday because the pot went up to P150,478,099.20.

Those who had bought tickets went out to buy some more, hoping to become instant multimillionaires.

Medici said the gross sales for Sunday alone in the Visayas and Mindanao areas reached P22 million, about P1 million higher than Thursday's sales of P21 million.

"That's the biggest sale we got so far in the Visayas and Mindanao in just ... one day," Medici said.

He said he noted that as the jackpot prize went higher, the more people bet.

If no one wins in a draw, 55 percent of the sales for that lotto category would go to the jackpot prize.

There are at least five lotto categories but the most popular is called the 3D, which has a three number combination and is drawn daily.

The other types include 4D (four digit), which is being drawn every Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Medici said PCSO exceeded its 2005 target in the Visayas and Mindanao because their total sales reached over P3 billion.

2 Pacquiao fans die of heart attack

WATCHING THE FIGHT OF FILIPINO BOXING hero Manny Pacquiao against Mexican Eric Morales in Las Vegas last Sunday proved too much for two elderly fans in Pagadian City and a town in Negros Occidental.

In Pagadian, Wilmor Lucernas said his 69-year old father Hilario, a retired government employee, was watching the Pacquiao-Morales match when he "suddenly went limp after profusely cheering."

The elder Lucernas was brought to a nearby hospital where he was declared dead.

Dr. Cresencia Borbon, the attending physician, said Lucernas suffered internal hemorrhage caused by a major heart stroke.

Wilmor said his father, who was a boxing aficionado, was already complaining chest pains during the sixth round of the match but ignored these and continued to watch the bout.

"When the referee declared Pacquiao winner by TKO, it was when my father was cheering profusely and suddenly went limp. He slumped on the sofa where he was sitting," Wilmor told INQUIRER.

Lucernas, during his youth, tried boxing when they were still living on Camotes Island, Cebu, said his sister Editha Suero, 62.

The Lucernas' wish was for Pacquiao to visit them in Pagadian when he returns home on Friday.

"All we want is for Manny to pay his number one fan a visit," elder son Antonieto said.

Antonieto said his father died very proud of Pacquiao.

The elder Lucernas was a former maintenance worker at the city government's motor pool section of the City Engineering Office.

In Negros Occidental, Rolando Aspa Sr., 74, suffered cardiac arrest while watching the delayed telecast of the game in his son's home at Barangay 1A in Manapla town.

Milagros Aspa, 73, said her husband suddenly slumped in the chair after being so excited on the second round when he thought that Pacquiao would knock out Morales.

"In the second round, he suddenly went quiet and we saw him slump in his chair. We did not see the rest of the fight as we rushed him to the Ikaayong Lawas Clinic in Victoria City, but he could not be revived. He suffered from cardiac arrest," Milagros said.

The couple sell bananas and root crops from a pushcart for a living.

"What will I do without out him, I am old and cannot push our cart alone?" she asked.

She said their children were grown up and have lives of their own.

"My husband died watching the man he loved fight for the country, I hope Manny Pacquiao can give me a little help too as we are very poor," she said. *Michael Sarcauga, PDI Mindanao Bureau and Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

'Agaton' leaves thousands in ports stranded

TABACO CITY—A TOTAL OF 2,262 PASSENGERS, 47 sea vessels, 42 buses and 23 small vehicles were stranded in four major ports in Bicol due to tropical depression "Agaton," the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) reported yesterday.

Philippine Coast Guard spokesperson Commander Joseph Coyme said the agency automatically suspended the trips of all boats weighing 1,000 gross tons and below every time Storm Signal No. 1 was declared.

The number of stranded passengers, most of them students coming from different islands, could still rise, according to OCD regional director Arnel Capili.

As of 11 a.m. yesterday, the OCD monitored 1,629 passengers and 38 sea vessels stranded at Matnog Port in Sorsogon alone.

In Tabaco City, 400 passengers and four big boats were not allowed to leave the port.

Pilar port in Sorsogon had 200 stranded passengers and Sabang port in Camarines Sur, 23.

But a report of the PCG in Manila gave higher figures of stranded passengers in Tabaco with 422 and Pilar with 290. The report said 43 were stranded in Sabang and 12 in Bulan.

In Tacloban City, classes in the elementary level were suspended on Monday after Agaton threatened to lash at the three Samar provinces.

Affected were public and private elementary schools in Samar, Northern Samar and Eastern Samar, which had been placed under Signal No. 1.

Although Tacloban was not included, Mayor Alfredo "Bejo" Romualdez decided to suspend all elementary classes due to the bad weather.

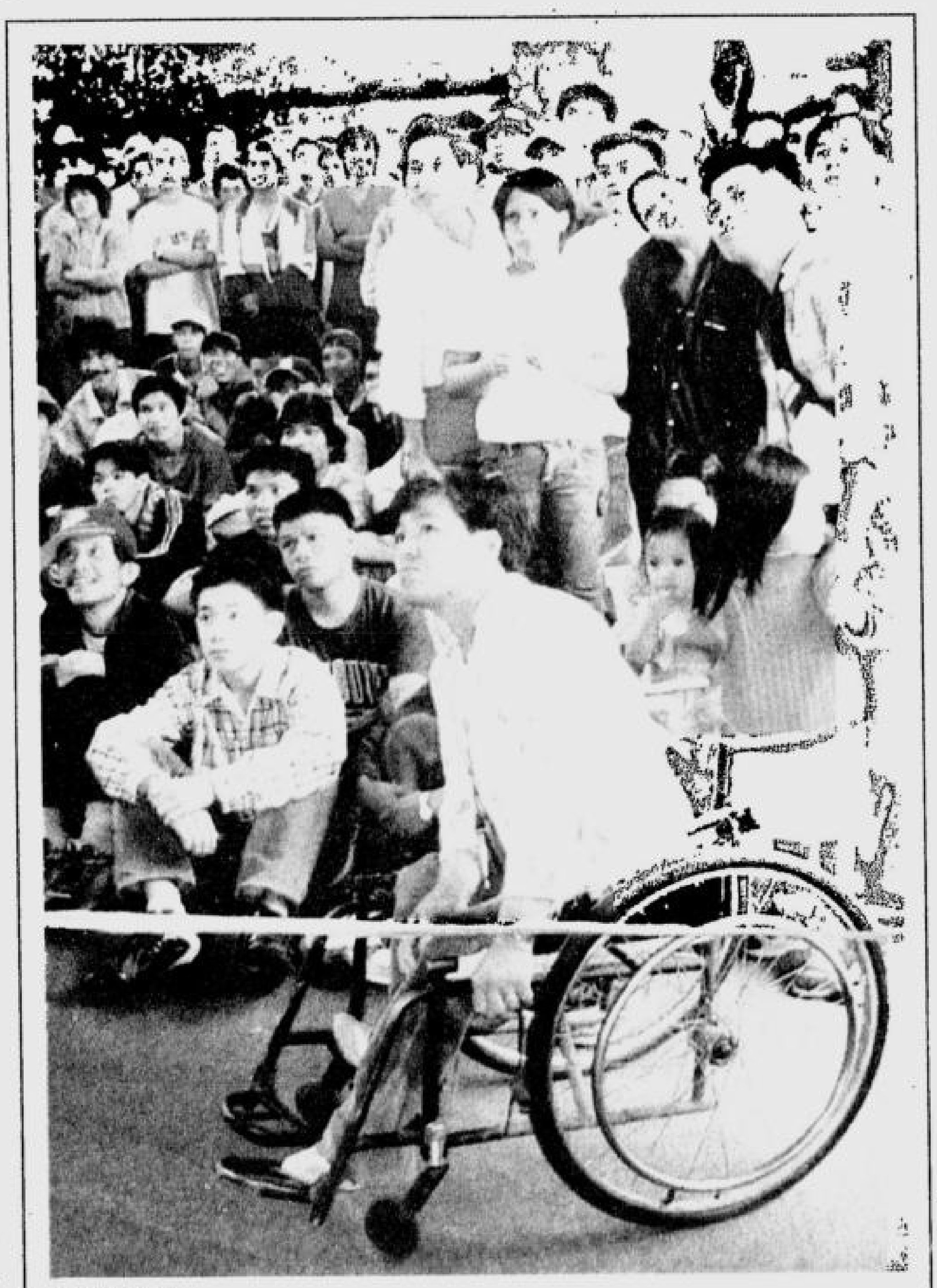
He convened the City Disaster Coordinating Council to map out measures to minimize the possible destruction brought about by Agaton.

He directed the offices on engineering, general services and social welfare to be on alert.

All public schools have been designated as relocation sites in case families need to be evacuated. Packs of ready-to-eat food have also been prepared for distribution.

The OCD in Eastern Visayas directed all local government units, especially in Samar and Tacloban, to activate their disaster coordinating councils.

It warned those living along the coastline to temporarily seek shelter on higher grounds for their safety. *Gil Francis G. Arevalo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau and Joey A. Gabieta, PDI Visayas Bureau and Leila B. Salaverria in Manila*



AVID FAN
A wheelchair bound spectator joins a throng of fans of Filipino boxing hero Manny Pacquiao in watching a live broadcast of Pacquiao's fight against Mexican Erik Morales in Baguio City. The broadcast was made possible by ABS-CBN. TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Soldier killed in Samar NPA ambush

TACLOBAN CITY—A SOLDIER WAS KILLED while two others were wounded in an ambush yesterday by about 40 armed men, believed to be members of the New People's Army, in Barangay Laygayon, Pinabacdao town, Samar.

SSgt Anacleto Bacquites died at 12:45 p.m. while he was being treated of gunshot wounds in the back and chest at the Divine Word University Hospital in this city, some 45 km from Pinabacdao.

Bacquites was among six soldiers in a Light Ace van who were ambushed by the suspected rebels about 8:15 a.m. in Laygayon, some 40 km from their detachment.

The soldiers, of the Philippine Army's 46th Infantry Battalion based in Barangay Balante, Basey, Samar, were on their way to a meeting at the headquarters of the Army's 802nd Infantry Battalion in Barangay Bagacay, Hinabangan town when they were waylaid. *Joey A. Gabieta, PDI Visayas Bureau*

NPA admits failure in attack on outpost

BUTUAN CITY—MORE THAN 70 NEW PEOple's Army (NPA) rebels tried to overrun one of the largest paramilitary outposts in Surigao del Sur late Sunday but had to withdraw after their firearms malfunctioned, a high-ranking rebel leader in Mindanao said yesterday.

The military confirmed the foiled attack but took credit for the rebels' failure.

Lt. Col. Francisco Simbajon, spokesperson of the Army's 4th Infantry Division based in Cagayan de Oro, said the rebels tried to storm the paramilitary headquarters in Barangay Buhisan in San Agustin town but were repelled by the militiamen.

The outpost was manned by about 40 soldiers and militiamen.

Simbajon said the successful counterattack showed how equipped and well-trained the troops were.

"Military outposts are no easy targets, contrary to rebel propaganda," he said.

Jorge Madlos, alias Ka Oris, spokesperson of the National Democratic Front (NDF) in Mindanao, said the rebels were forced to retreat because some of their firearms malfunctioned.

"The command-detonated land mine we planted also did not explode," Madlos said.

He said the offensive would have been the biggest this month."

"It would have contributed to the resonating GMA ouster call and weakening military establishment," he told the INQUIRER.

Madlos vowed to correct the tactical errors and continue to launch offensives to force President Macapagal-Arroyo to step down.

In Cotabato City, officials of Magpet, North Cotabato on Monday declared war against the NPA after communist rebels killed an Army sergeant and a militiaman last week. *Franklin M. Caliguid with a report from Jeoffrey Maitem, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

ROUNDUP

Man admits killing teenagers

BUTUAN CITY—A man claiming to be a police civilian agent admitted killing two teenagers, whose bodies were found in Barangay Bayanihan here. Melecio Santos, 37, said he shot and killed Rowena Tagab, 14 and Rosemarie Eparaguerre, 17, with a .45 cal. pistol because they stole his Nokia 8210 mobile phone while they were drinking. "I was very angry, that's why I shot them," Santos said from the police jail where he was held. Insp. Bartolome Ladroma, regional chief of the police intelligence unit, denied that Santos was a confidential civilian agent.

Franklin A. Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Murder suspect hunted

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—Authorities said they were hunting the suspect in the killing of Lt. Col. Eduardo Peralta, commander of the 10th Field Artillery Battalion. Peralta was gunned down in the back of his quarters on Jan. 14. City police chief Senior Supt. Arnold Trampe said more witnesses were also being approached to strengthen the case against the suspect, who is also a soldier.

Grace C. Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Hostage taker yields

DYUSKOhpo!
SALAMAT DI PA KO
KINUHA NI LORD !

BAGUIO CITY—A man held a teenager hostage inside a building in Apayao early morning of Jan. 17, but police calmed the man down and convinced him to surrender, said Cordillera police director Chief Supt. Leonardo Dionisio. Jerry Domingo, 31, of Flora town, held the 16-year-old at knife point inside the preachers' room of the Jesus Miracle Crusade office in Pudtol town at 7:30 a.m. Police convinced Domingo to release the victim, a member of the evangelical group, and to surrender, according to an Apayao police report.

Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

3 dead in smashup

BALANGA CITY—Three people were killed on Jan. 17 when a jeepney slammed a bus in Mariveles town in Bataan, police said. Police identified the fatalities as Corazon Baylon, Eduardo Melo and Beatriz Sunga. The bus, which was bound for this city, stopped abruptly along the Roman Superhighway in Barangay Cabcaben, Mariveles, and the jeepney that was tailing it crashed onto its rear, police said.

Greg Refraccion, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Resolution on mining

KAYA
DAPAT
"ALAMIN" !

CITY OF CALAPAN—The Sangguniang Bayan of Victoria, Oriental Mindoro, site of nickel mining, passed a resolution on Jan. 9 opposing Crew Mining Co.'s mining operations with a 7-1 vote, according to the Alyansa Laban sa Mina (Alamin). About 100 Alamin members guarded the voting, said Jon Sarmiento, a staff member of the Diocesan Service Commission. Alamin had been closely guarding the municipal council's sessions since November.

Madonna T. Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Suspected gang leader nabbed

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—A suspected leader of a robbery gang operating in Laguna and four of his supposed henchmen were arrested at a police checkpoint in Sta. Cruz, Laguna last weekend. Calabarzon police chief Chief Supt. Jesus Verzosa identified the suspects as Christopher Gallardo, alleged gang leader, Jonathan Fulloso, Noel Lleones, Emerson Cosio and Abel Piniera. The suspects, he said, were stopped at a checkpoint in Barangay Pagsawitan at about 5:30 p.m. on Sunday because they were riding on two motorcycles without license plates.

Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Rob-slay suspect nabbed

STA. CRUZ, Laguna—Police on Jan. 10 arrested the suspect in the robbery and killing in December last year of the owner of a money changer shop here. SPO2 Alejandro Alvarez said the suspect, Arnold Ching, was caught in Nagcarlan, Laguna while coercing Brenda Villanueva, a witness in the robbery and homicide cases filed against him and three others. Villanueva, in her sworn affidavit, positively identified Ching as among those who staged the robbery-holdup, resulting in the death of Ritch-Jhen Money Changer owner Consorcia P. Roxas last Dec. 4.

Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Village leader shot dead

CALAMBA CITY—A village councilor and *barangay tanod* (village watchman) of this city were shot dead by two unidentified men on Jan. 10. Police said councilman Florencio G. Mercado, 53, and Rufino Q. Magpantay, 34, who had just attended a prayer meeting, died on the spot.

Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Carry on Cavaliers

"The night no matter how long will inevitably end in dawn."

Like others who spent a major part of their life in the military, I am saddened and devastated by what's happening to our country and to our institution today.

The young men who entered the Service full of idealism, in whose hearts were hammered the virtues of honesty, honor, patriotism and integrity, now find themselves torn between duty to the people they are mandated to protect, and an imposed loyalty to a leadership perceived as no longer loved nor trusted by the people.

And the institution! Now widely seen as slowly being undone, razed to the dust of people's contempt by the dirty hands of politics and power brokers. I, for one support you, our young cavaliers. Doing what you have done because you believe standing up for the people is superior mandate to bowing to the will of the authority whose legitimacy is in serious doubt is a difficult decision to make. But you made it. Boldly. With no thought of consequences. Guided solely by your feeling for the welfare of the people and your institution.

They have thrown the book at you for breaching the Chain-of-Command. Did you?

The principle of the Chain-of-Command is to hold the military in strictest and steadfast discipline the better for it to fulfill its constitutional duty as the guardian and protector of the people. Chain-of-Command is not meant to be put around the neck to strangle and restrain legitimate and constructive dissent and kill sound and meritorious ideas that do not please or serve the interest of those at the top.

If the depth of dishonor this Administration has sunk our beloved institution appalls you, it does me a hundred times. Congressional investigation on the use of the military, its men and resources, in the 2004 election, reveals the deliberate commission of sacrilege and travesty of the sacred tradition of our institution.

I fully understand your concern, discontent and disgust about the manner the political leadership is manhandling the military. Like you, I want the institution I belong to to be admired and trusted and looked up with respect by the people.

But despair not. Cavaliers, young and old and retired. The night no matter how long will inevitably end in dawn. Struggle on. Keep faith. Implore Divine guidance. And when the night is gone and dawn has come we will join hands and, together with the people who believe in real, genuine and peaceful change, repair the damage done to our lives, our careers, and our institutions. And resolve, **NEVER AGAIN.**

God bless, Cavaliers, and carry on!

Major General Fortunato U. Abat (Ret.)

ADVT.

PHOTO-OP FOR POSTERITY: Participants in the Council of State meeting pose with President Arroyo at the end of the three-hour forum. Except for Sen. Edgardo Angara, opposition leaders snubbed the meeting of the Council of State formed in 1987 by President Cory Aquino to provide an incumbent president with information and advice on pressing issues of national interest. LYN RILLON

Council scraps 'No-El'

From page A1

Participants also said there was an agreement for the Senate and the House to create a bicameral body to talk informally about Charter change.

Ms Arroyo described the three-hour meeting as "fruitful." She said the group tackled "our concern on governance, Charter change, electoral reforms and social development." She said proposals on social development, including jobs creation, were "very worthwhile and doable."

The council, created in 1987 by former President Corazon Aquino, was envisioned to provide the incumbent President "with reliable information and competent advice on pressing issues and problems of national interest."

But Aquino as well as other members of the opposition boycotted the meeting and pressed calls for Ms Arroyo's resignation.

Aquino broke away from Ms Arroyo last July following disclosures in the Virgilio Garcillano wiretapping scandal that Ms Arroyo rigged the May 2004 presidential election.

Ramos had proposed Charter change to provide Ms Arroyo "a graceful exit" amid questions on her legitimacy.

ConCom to join campaign

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita later told reporters the advocacy commission would be made up of 15 members and would include officials of the Consultative Commission.

ConCom, a 55-member panel created by Ms Arroyo last year, drafted a federal-type parliamentary constitution which the House of Representatives last week decided to use as reference.

The commission recommended the scrapping of the 2007 balloting to pave the way for the adoption of the parliamentary system. This meant extending the terms of the representatives who will be members of an interim parliament and abolishing the Senate.

In Executive Order No. 495 signed on Jan. 23, Ms Arroyo tasked the advocacy commission to "advocate the shift from presidential to a parliamentary form of government, from a unitary structure of government to autonomous territories/federal states, and liberalization of the economy."

These were contained in the ConCom report.

ConCom Chair Jose Abueva acknowledged that there was a need to "continue the information campaign and get the people to really know the details of the changes."

Issues not understood

"There are many substantive issues that are not yet understood," Abueva told reporters after the meeting.

Bunye said surveys had shown that not too many Filipinos understood issues as basic as the Constitution. He said no timeline had yet been given on how long the advocacy commission would do its work but the executive order creating it mentioned eight months.

Asked by reporters if the proposed timeline of the President to have Charter change in place by June would be pushed back by the work of the advocacy group, Ermita said: "I can't give you a specific answer. I don't know how fast the group can work."

Ramos said he was satisfied with the turnout of the meeting as he stressed the need for "teamwork and unity" in achieving the objectives.

99 percent for 2007 polls

Asked about the outcome of the discussions on the proposal to scrap the 2007 polls, Ramos said: "I think almost all of us, say 99 percent, agreed to push ahead with the 2007 elections."

Antipolo Rep. Ronaldo Puno said "there was a consensus that there will be elections in 2007 but there was no formal consensus."

"I don't think an official position was arrived at by the group. What happened was opinions were expressed and the opinion was that there should be elections," Puno said.

He noted that even the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines president Erico Aumentado told the group that Ulap had never been for no elections in 2007.

Vice President Noli de Castro, who proposed the information drive, said in his opening remarks that "the key to a successful healing process is understanding the defects of the system and collectively proposing solutions."

Heed Pacquiao's wish

"The people must understand what ills our country and it is best if they have a more meaningful participation in the cure."

De Castro urged leaders of the administration and the opposition to heed the wish of boxing champion Manny Pacquiao for an end to political bickering.

"After this meeting, we should continue to reach out to our people and other national leaders, especially those who for one reason or another were not able to attend this historic council [meeting]," De Castro said.

In his opening statement, Ramos warned those in power against pursuing a no-election scenario.

"The prospect of no election is to me, in my humble opinion, a national disaster waiting to happen, but which can be prevented or remedied by congressional action," Ramos said.

"The holding of elections in 2007 as expected by the people would be the most powerful argument that we can muster to erase the international community's perception that the Philippines is partly free," he said.

Some administration senators who attended the meeting complained that instead of having a fruitful dialogue, they were treated to "lectures" on the urgency of Charter change.

Senators against Cha-cha

"We were invited to the Palace ballroom to dance the Cha-cha but we respectfully begged off," Sen. Ralph Recto said.

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago laid down the gauntlet early on when she and Makati Rep. Teodoro Locsin asked those present to junk Cha-cha and the proposal to postpone the 2007 elections.

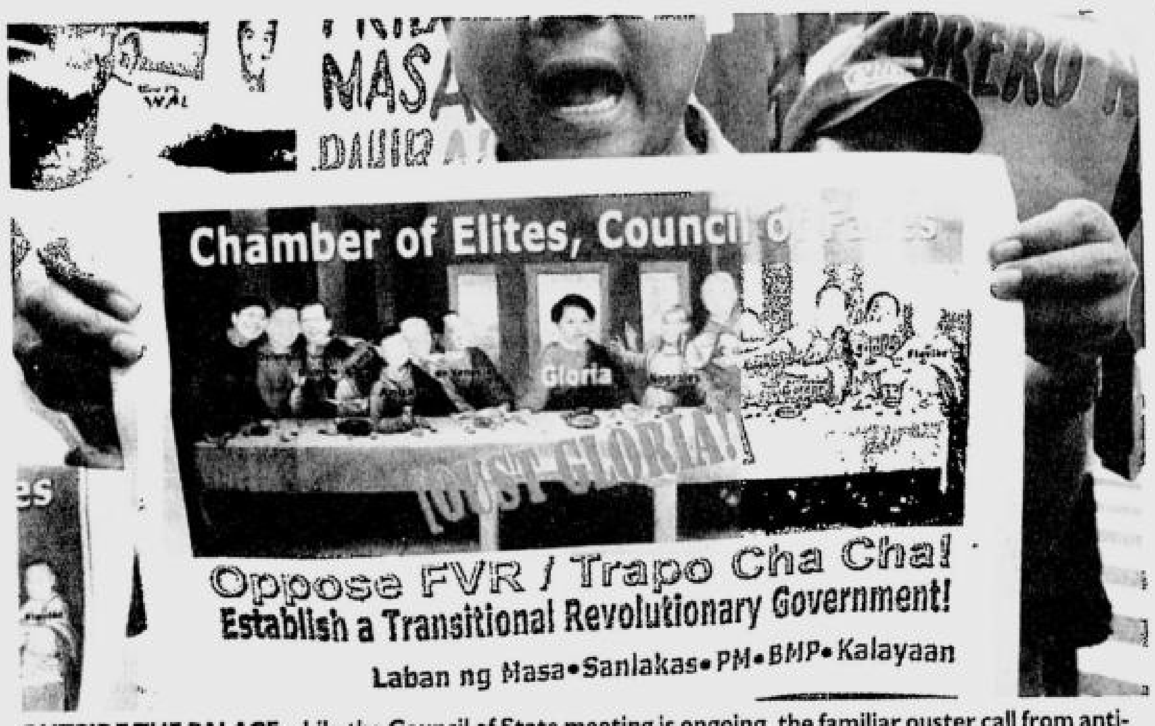
"What moral values will those Cha-cha solons leave to the next generation, if the solons personally benefit by the automatic extension of their terms of office without elections?" Santiago said in a statement.

Santiago said she and Locsin insisted that Ms Arroyo should complete her term until 2010, and that "those who keep saying that they support her should do so without bringing in the Cha-cha."

Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said the council, as provided for by EO 168, was meant to be "an advisory body to the President and should not have been used as a platform to push for Cha-cha."

"We reiterate our position that the Senate will not be arm-twisted into Cha-cha," Pangilinan said.

With reports from Cynthia D. Balana and Philip C. Tubeza


MASA
Chamber of Elites, Counci
Gloria
OUST GLORIA!
Oppose FVR / Trapo Cha Cha!
Establish a Transitional Revolutionary Government!
Laban ng Masa•Sanlakas•PM•BMP•Kalayaan

OUTSIDE THE PALACE while the Council of State meeting is ongoing, the familiar ouster call from anti-Arroyo forces could be heard loud and clear and posters like the above are on display. REM ZAMORA

2 Pinays have lock on champion wrestler's heart

From page A1

girl from the Philippines whom Foley had sponsored under the Christian Children's Fund, one of the most respected child development organizations in the world. The first girl, who hailed from Cotabato, was sponsored by Foley from 1992 to 2001, when she graduated from the program.

Feb. 24-25 at Araneta

Foley said he would be meeting his current inspiration along with her three siblings and her parents for the first time when they come to see him during the WWE Raw Live Tour scheduled for Feb. 24-25 at the Araneta Coliseum.

"It will be their first time to come to Manila," Foley said, "and it is another reason for me to come over and wrestle."

Foley is currently sponsoring four children—one each from the Philippines, Ethiopia, Senegal and Sri Lanka—but said it was the one from the Philippines he felt closest to.

Started with an ad

"She is about 14 now and she writes me all the time," Foley said. "I write to her more often than I do anyone else in the world."

"She always asks God to bless me and she thanks me for helping people," he added.

Helping people from the Philippines is something that Foley has been doing through the CCF since 1992.

He just saw an ad in the Philippines about what CCF was doing. He called up CCF about the ad and was shown pictures of children who needed help.

One of them was the child from Cotabato.

Special ties

That was the start of Foley's special relationship with the Philippines.

She, too, was a frequent letter writer, according to Foley, but he managed to write back only about eight times in the close to 10 years he was sponsoring her.

"When I got this new child, she made it clear that not writing was not acceptable, so I write more often now," he said.

Childhood center

Aside from sponsoring the two children, Foley became a partner of CCF in its early childhood development program, which addresses children's basic development needs, including health and nutrition, so they will be better equipped to start school.

That partnership gave birth to a childhood center in Quezon under the Southern Luzon Bright Future Program, that was financed partly by the proceeds of "Tales From Wrescal Lane," one of three children's books to his name.

"The center helps children aged three and younger and I have been told that it benefits some 3,000 people from seven different communities there," Foley said.

Wrestler's money

He has set his sights on helping build another center in Pasig and has committed to donate all of the money he would earn from the WWE Raw Live Tour to completing the center.

The 40-year-old Foley, who wrestled under the names Cactus Jack, Mankind and Dude Love, is one of the featured wrestlers in the two-day event at Araneta Coliseum.

He will come back in February together with WWE champion John Cena, Intercontinental champion Ric Flair, World Tag team champions Big Show and Kane and women's champion Trish Stratus.

Warmth of Pinoys

He promised to put on a great show when he comes back in February to give justice to the warm response he has received from Filipino fans.

"I have been wrestling for over 20 years," Foley said, "and the reaction from the Philippines has been the most phenomenal."

Streets a window to Filipino soul

From page A1

The streets in the Philippines reveal the nation's soul.

The sight of Filipinos, including women and children, patiently queuing under rain and sun for a jeepney ride is touching. A decade ago, there was only a mad scramble—that meant survival of the fittest—in the constant battle for scarce public transport.

Traffic rules a joke

Traffic rules remain a joke. They are either ignored with impunity or not enforced at all—even when there's a policeman around.

The most notorious traffic violators are congressmen, senators and administration officials who even flaunt their errant ways with their siren-blaring police escorts. They remind me of the warlords in Afghanistan and Liberia, whose bodyguards are festooned with bandoliers. Their Filipino counterparts are more sedate, their guns tucked under their waists or in clutch bags.

Corrida in Manila

An Australian priest teaching values formation in a Quezon City school says 70 percent of students in his class believe that lawmakers have the right to violate laws, seeing how they oh so often make a mockery of them in the streets.

Driving requires the tolerance and patience of Job. Most people behind wheels are illiterates. They are clueless on elementary traffic rules or ethics.

A clogged street easily turns into a corrida and drivers into matadors.

Try flashing your signal light to take a turn and the chances are the guy on either side would not let you pass. Often, the element of surprise works. Simply swerve when you get an inch of space and you're home free.

Bayani Fernando is trying but I'm afraid he won't succeed unless LTO scraps all those licenses it has issued and requires all new applicants to take an honest-to-goodness driving examination.

There is no cure to the madness of taxi, bus and jeepney drivers unless the boundary system—essentially plunking down cash for a day's use of the vehicle for public transport—is abolished and they are given decent wages.

Speed maniacs

Politicians are just too afraid to do anything about so-called "populist policies" that would cost them the election votes of squatters and jeepney drivers. They close their eyes to wanton disobedience of ordinary norms of human conduct and abet the mockery of laws.

This probably explains the nation's failure to cope with the demands for decent housing and transport facilities, among tons of other sorely needed services.

In other climes, the operation of public transport system is a government function.

There are speed maniacs anywhere, but there is decorum in the streets, at least in Geneva, where I used to live. Vehicles stop as a matter of course to let people cross pedestrian lanes. They can take all the time in the world to do that and the drivers just have to stop and let them pass.

Chivalry reigns ...

Here, even if you cross on a pedestrian lane, you have to run for your life.

Chivalry thrives in trams and buses, at least in Switzerland. No matter how they are crammed, women, the old and the very young are given seats. Civility reigns—as it does in all aspects of every interaction and commerce. Woe unto you if you rush in before those disembarking have left the vehicle. Politesse is valued in these places.

On major intersections in US roads, cars follow the rules and cross one at a time. Road courtesy is simply amazing.

... but not on Ayala

Just before Christmas I got stuck at Ayala Avenue extension while attempting to cross Jupiter to Nicanor Garcia on the other side. I was following one car that had, inch by bitter inch, mercifully managed to get out of the jam.

I was following suit, my kisser just touching his derierre when a man suddenly, out of nowhere, jumped in front of my vehicle.

After being stuck there for 30 minutes, I was ready to run over the SOB who had forthwith started directing traffic. Back in the slums of Manila's San Andres Bukid, where I grew up, this kind of thing did not go unchallenged. But there were four other guys who came and joined in unclogging the Jupiter snafu.

Thugs as traffic cops

So, I held my peace. Prudence is the better part of valor. I said maybe these were good guys, much like the thugs untangling streets in exchange for drinking money in our neighborhood decades ago.

Certainly they seemed like the Afghan men in the shadow of the Hindu Kush, covering rutted roads with dirt to let travelers pass in the hope they could get a few Afghanis.

I was lost in reverie when a garbage truck swept by and the men jumped into it, leaving the street as clogged as ever.

I sat in my car gnashing my teeth for what seemed like forever.

Balkan wars

Getting caught in a traffic jam in Manila is like being in a bind in a war zone, in places where there's no government, where anarchy reigns.

The feeling of helplessness is similar to that I had experienced while delivering humanitarian supplies during the Balkan wars. There, you got stuck in Serbian checkpoints for hours as police and paramilitary troops searched UN trucks for non-existent weapons in an attempt to delay deliveries to besieged villages.

On coming home

It is as nerve-wracking as being kidnapped in Kinshasa as mobs roamed the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo, hunting for UN personnel they blamed for the fall to rebel hands of the lovely eastern town of Bukavu at the edge of Lake Kivu, from where I had just been evacuated.

I used to dismiss those incidents as part of a character-building exercise.

But coming home, there is a sinking feeling of finality in resigning yourself to being trapped in the recurring anarchy of Manila's streets.

It sucks.

METRO

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Editor Ester G. Dipasupil

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Trader rescued from abductors

BEN Torrefil, one of three kidnap suspects arrested yesterday. JOAN BONDOC

By Luige A. del Puerto, and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

LESS THAN 24 HOURS AFTER he was kidnapped, the police rescued an Indian businessman from his abductors in San Mateo, Rizal, early yesterday morning.

Karnail Singh Chahal, 45, a resident of Marikina City, was recovered unharmed after the police swooped down on a shanty in Barangay Gulod.

The police also killed one suspect and arrested three others, including the alleged leader of the kidnap-for-ransom gang operating in Eastern Metro Manila and Rizal province. Chahal, who runs a money-lending business, was kidnapped by armed men while collecting payments at the SSS Village in Marikina City at about 12:30 p.m. on Monday, police said.

"The suspects told me they were policemen. They dragged me inside a van and covered my eyes with a white towel," Chahal told the INQUIRER.

Three hours after the abduction, Chahal called his family to say he had been kidnapped and that his abductors had demanded P5 million in ransom, said Sukhdeep Singh, a relative.

Residents who witnessed the kidnapping provided the rescuers with a description of the getaway vehicle. The police also alerted all its "assets" or informers in Metro Manila and Rizal, according to Marikina City Police head Senior Supt. Manuel Gaerlan.

On Monday night, Gaerlan's team, along with Rizal policemen, had already pinpointed the kidnappers' safe house. They moved in at 7:30 a.m. yesterday.

Arrested were Romeo Jimenez alias "Jun Bombay," the alleged gang leader; Onkar Singh, who allegedly acted as the group's "tipster;" and Ben Torrefil. Another suspect, Joel Royo, died after he allegedly exchanged fire with policemen. After news of the suspects' arrest broke out, several Indians showed up at the Marikina City Police Station and pointed to some of the suspects as among those who kidnapped them last year. One claimed he paid P1.4 million in ransom after the suspects took him on Nov. 9, 2005.

Another said his family paid a P2.5 million ransom three weeks ago before the suspects released him.

Grandma killed, 5 hurt in Las Piñas blaze

By Jocelyn R. Uy

A TWO-HOUR FIRE KILLED A 75-year-old woman, injured five persons, and destroyed over 50 houses in Las Piñas City yesterday morning.

Fire investigators identified the fatality as Rosalinda Rufino, a resident of the house on Hollywood Compound, Barangay Pamplona Dos, Alabang-Zapote Road, where the fire reportedly started.

Rufino's daughter, Rebecca Navarete, said the fire broke out at 9:45 a.m. after she accidentally dropped a liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) tank she was carrying, causing it to explode.

A tearful Navarete said she bought the LPG tank hours before, adding that she decided to take it back because it had a leak.

"I was going down the stairs from the second floor when the tank slipped from my hands," she told the INQUIRER. "It was too heavy."

The LPG tank rolled on to the first floor where it blew up.

Navarete, her daughter and a grandson lived on the second floor of the house.

They got out through a window.

Rufino, who lived on the first floor, was trapped inside the house. "She could not get out because the fire was just outside the door," Navarete said.

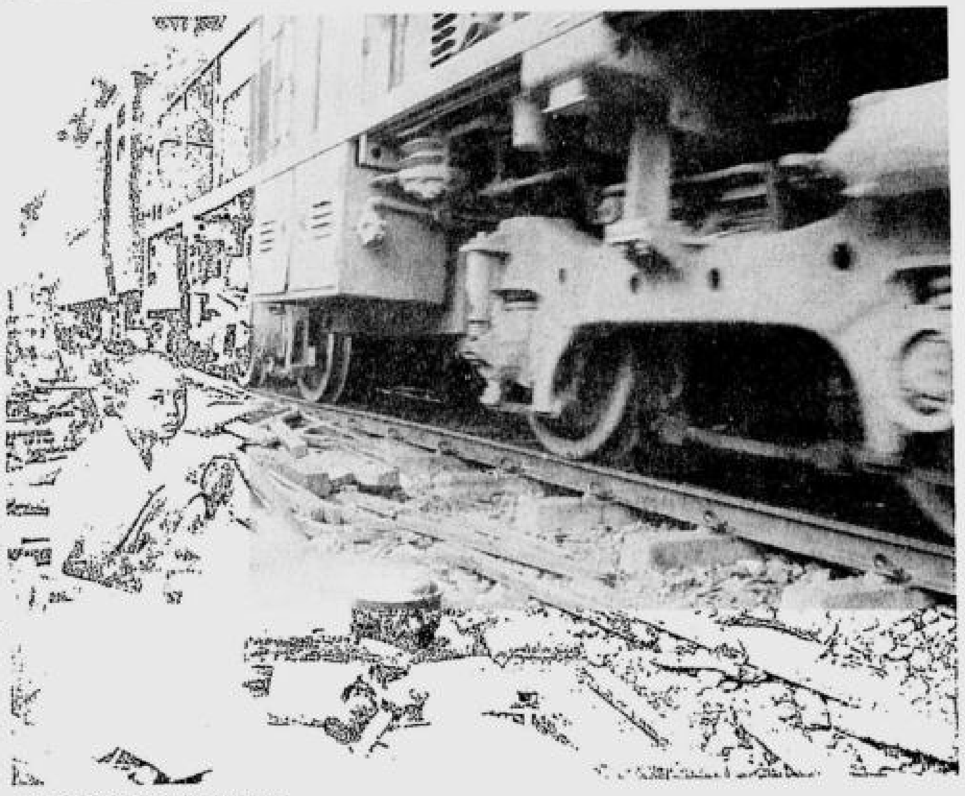
Naverete's daughter and a relative could only cry while firemen retrieved Rufino's burnt body from the house.

Deputy fire marshal Aldwin Salazar said the fire destroyed 50 other houses, leaving at least 80 families homeless and causing P2 million worth of damage to property.

"This is the third time this compound was hit by a fire," Salazar told the INQUIRER yesterday.

SF03 Roberto Mulan added that fire spread quickly because the houses were made of light materials.

Five other people were injured, three of them children, he said.



COOKING ON EDGE
A boy flirts with death as he cooks his family's meal, just inches away from a passing train in Makati. The informal settlers along the railroad tracks would be relocated to Cabuyao, Laguna, to make way for the NorthRail project. REM ZAMORA

Birds find new home in Manila orphanage

By Tina G. Santos

BIRDS AND OTHER wildlife species may soon find a haven at the grounds of the Hospicio de San Jose, a shelter for abandoned children and the elderly.

Regina Paterno, president of Winner Foundation, a group of environmentalists which has been looking after the contested Arroceros Forest Park, said they plan to grow a mini forest at the orphanage grounds.

Paterno said they would plant 187 trees to represent the number of trees which the Manila City government cut down or uprooted in the park to make way for a two-story building for teachers in the area.

She said they plan to plant fruit trees, including santol, lanzones, mango and atis in the new site.

Paterno added that Winner Foundation would clean up the forest park on Feb. 5.

She also called for volunteers from other environmental groups to watch over the forest.

Regular watch

"We need more people to look after the forest park on a regular basis," Paterno added.

Earlier, Paterno accused the city government of dumping garbage, including old Christmas decorations, inside the forest park.

"Two old, big Christmas trees were thrown in the area, and we fear that this could be the beginning of the forest's conversion into a dump," she said. "They're ruining the place," she added.

Winner Foundation is locked in a legal battle with the Manila City government over the park.

The foundation claims it had been given a 15-year contract to develop the area, but the local government insists the contract is void.

Winner had also sought an injunction to stop the Manila government from constructing the teachers' building in the park.

This was denied, however, by Judge Teresa Soriaso of Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 27.

Anti-drugs course for Metro graders

By Margaux C. Ortiz

NEARLY 8,000 GRADE SCHOOL STUDENTS have enrolled in a program which would, hopefully, keep them drug-free as they grow up.

Supt. Rodolfo Llorca, chief of the Manila Police District (MPD) Anti-Illegal Drugs division, said 7,342 students from 22 public and private schools in the city completed the DARE program last year.

DARE stands for the Drug Abuse Resistance Education program that the Manila police conduct annually for elementary school students.

Theme

The program has the theme: "Stay Away From Drugs... Live a Prosperous and Wholesome Life Towards a Strong Republic."

"The latest batch of graduates came from Paco Catholic School with 630 grade school students," Llorca said in a statement.

Under the 17-week DARE program, MPD officers discuss the advantages and benefits of avoiding drugs with the students.

Justin Magsalin, a grade five student at the Paco Catholic School, said the DARE program taught her and her classmates to turn away from illegal drugs.

"It opened our minds to the bad effects and consequences of using drugs," Magsalin said.

METROBRIEFS

File complaint, victims told

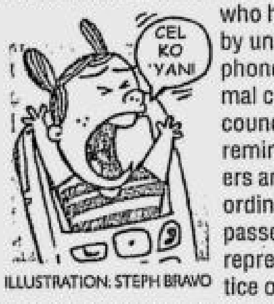


ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

A SAN JUAN councilor yesterday urged residents who had been victimized by unscrupulous cell phone dealers to file a formal complaint. San Juan councilor Dante Santiago reminded cell phone buyers and owner that a town ordinance had been passed prohibiting misrepresentation—the practice of some stall owners of misleading buyers by passing off a used and re-conditioned cell phone as brand new. The ordinance, which Santiago sponsored in 2002, imposes a P2,500 fine on stall owners. A second offense, on the other hand, would mean the revocation of their business license or imprisonment of 30 days. The councilor issued the reminder after two television reporters found their stolen company-issued XDA-II phones being sold by two stall owners inside the Greenhills Shopping Center. But ABC-5 reporters Theresa Andrada and Jason Torres have not yet filed any complaint, the police said. *Edson C. Tandoc Jr.*

Not once, but twice

A COURIER for a money changer in San Juan lost $15,000 on Monday to four robbers who also shot him in the stomach. But Eleasar Pasague, 34, lived to tell the police that the thieves who attacked him in Mandaluyong City were the same persons who had robbed him more than a year ago. Pasague told the police he was driving his black motorcycle along the Edsa Underpass in Crossing at about 3:30 p.m. Monday when four men on board two red motorcycles blocked his path. One of them took the bundle of dollar bills he was carrying and shot him in the stomach. "This looks like an inside job. The robbers knew the victim was carrying money," Mandaluyong City Police chief Supt. Ericson Velasquez told the INQUIRER. *Edson C. Tandoc Jr.*

Help for the poor

A FOUNDATION that promotes self-reliance among the poor has joined forces with the Quezon City government for its micro-finance livelihood program. ASA Foundation, a group that seeks to help poor families through self-help initiatives, has signed an agreement with the city government to serve as a conduit for its program awarding collateral-free and low-interest loans to smalltime entrepreneurs.. *DJ Yap*

Arellano High induction

THE ARELLANO High School Class '67 will hold its induction of officers on Jan. 28 at the Kamayan restaurant on West Avenue, Quezon City. Elected were Alberto Lim, president; Percival Andres, first vice president; Ricardo "Ding" Gonzales, second vice president; Yvonne David-Valdez, Loreto "Lorrie" Santos-Ravena, Milagros dela Paz-Corpuz, Agapito "Pete" Valero, Benjamin Clemente, Luverne Gueco, Juanito dela Masa, Jr., Norberto Panganiban and Felipe Falcon, board members. For details, please call Yvonne at 3233272 and 0919-5283897.

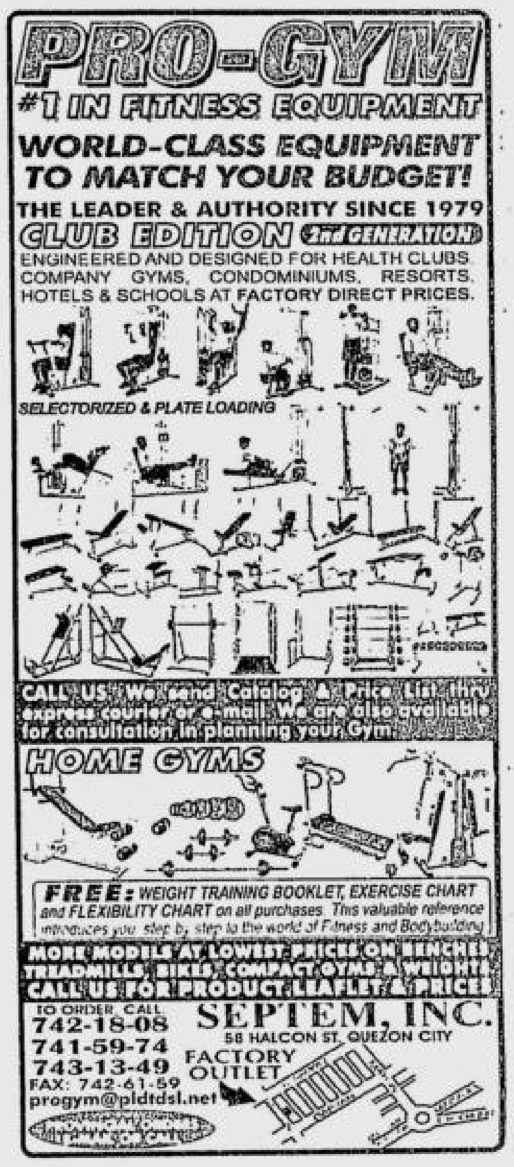
Acting UE president named

GARCIA

DR. ESTER Albano-Garcia, former chair of the Commission on Higher Education (CHEd), has been appointed acting president of the University of the East (UE). Dr. Garcia is a cum laude graduate, major in Chemistry, of the University of the Philippines. She topped the 1963 chemistry board exams and holds a Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry from the Ohio State University. She has held various academic and managerial positions in the last four decades, including the CHEd chairmanship from July 1999 to May 2003. Dr. Garcia is the 11th president of UE which will mark its 60th anniversary this year.

Ely Lopez burial

ELEAZAR S. Lopez, former managing editor of People's Journal, will be buried tomorrow at the Manila Memorial Park in Sucat, Parañaque City. The funeral will be preceded by a Mass at 11 a.m. at the Mt. Carmel Church on Broadway St., Quezon City. Lopez, who was also a commentator for DWWW 774, died of a heart attack on Jan. 19. He was the brother of Tony Lopez, BizNews Asia publisher and editor; Vic, Leonardo, Lorna, George and Leopoldo. His widow, Concepcion, would like to thank those who extended their condolences.



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For more information, contact Ms. Ramos at telephone numbers 834-2649 and 891-6161 local 4581.

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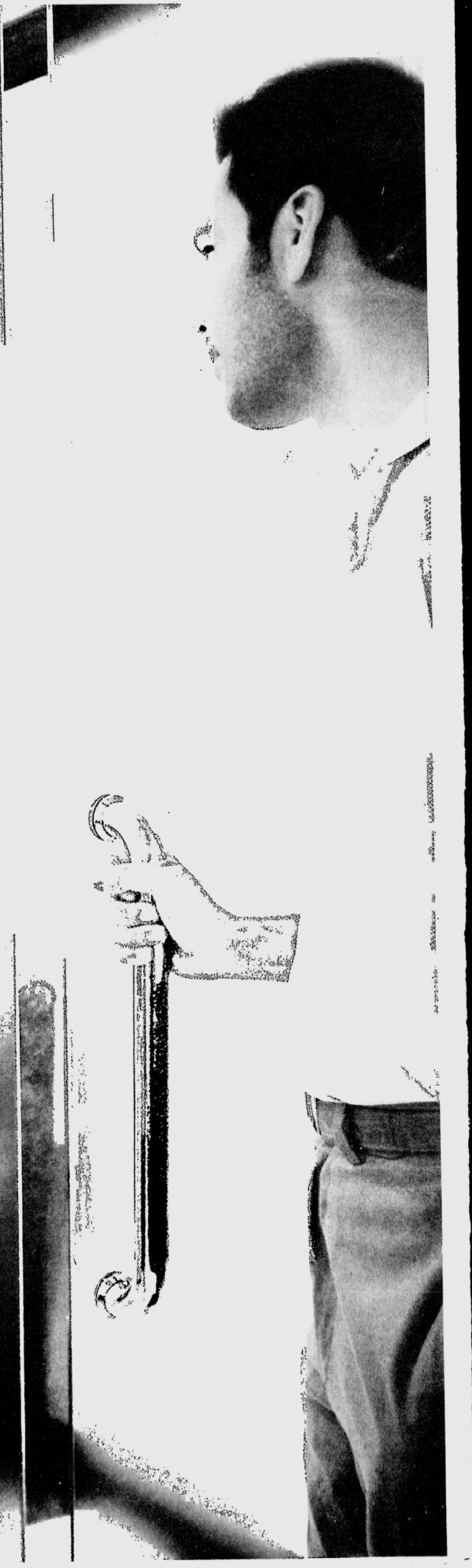
Executive Vice President
Finance Sector

Plug N' Play Your Own Contact Center



Information Overload is an affliction most common in any startup, leading to paralysis by analysis and followed by shutdown swifter than you can imagine. In the booming contact center industry, for example, new players have to consider everything from site location, technology platforms, support infrastructure, and agent training. Good luck wading through this mess: the staggering mountains of new literature on every operational aspect, the countless considerations you have to make at every turn. New data multiplies everyday and the information becomes overwhelming.

No, information is hardly the problem. What you as a new operator need, is simple: competence. The information is out there for sure, but who knows what to make of it?

What Makes You So Special?

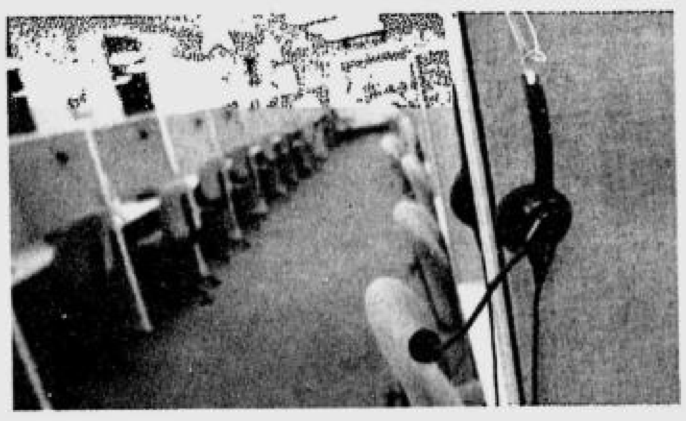
Your main concern as a new operator is the unique quality of your service - are your customer's needs being met? Today PLDT OnCall makes it possible for even non-techies to capitalize on the exciting opportunities offered in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Industry, among other sectors in this unparalleled growth area of services. The market's out there and you can serve it... PLDT OnCall is the way for you to go.

PLDT OnCall takes care of nearly everything else including infrastructure support with the most reliable platforms and solutions thanks to its partnership with Avaya, the world leader in contact center solutions. All the worrisome details including equipment maintenance, software upgrades, and agent training are all handled for you. This allows you to focus on your core competency - your customers.

You can think of it in simple techie analogies, it's Plug N' Play. The real golden component is your proprietary concept or business plan; you can leave all the other worrisome stuff in PLDT OnCall's competent hands. You can work on what you do best- your Big Idea.

To find out more about PLDT OnCall, log on to www.pldtoncall.com.ph or email bizsol@pldt.com.ph, or give us a call at 874-7474.

Call Centers: What You Should Know



There are basically two types of call centers (also more properly known as "contact" centers). A "Premised-based" contact center is one that you build and maintain on your own, while a "Network-based" or "Hosted" contact center as the name suggests, is one which is operated for you on a subcontracted basis for one or more key functions. By far it is the most cost-efficient option for entrepreneurs eager to make a first break in this hot industry.

PLDT OnCall gives you the most expert hosted contact center solutions, reducing your cost and worries the whole way through. Here are just some ways you can make the hosted option work for you:

- Premised-based contact centers can have immense costs including hardware, software licenses, installation and engineering services, take it from us, the list can get long. Hosted contact centers just charge you a low fixed rate per agent or seat that you operate.

- Premised-based contact centers need to develop and maintain all kinds of operational expertise which means pricey staff. These HR costs are constantly rising, but are actually lower with Hosted contact centers that have a ready pool of experts and resources at your disposal.

- A Hosted contact center's total cost of ownership is lower because you have no maintenance and future technology upgrade bills to worry about; upgrades are handled for you. The same cannot be said for Premised-based contact centers, they incur huge bills every time they need to "refresh".

- Similarly, every time a Premised-based contact center "scales upwards" because of growing business, this also incurs a huge cost. With a Hosted contact center, you have tremendous flexibility in scaling in either direction, up or down as it suits you.

- Disaster recovery! Think of your worst-case scenario and it usually involves a system crash of some sort. Premised-based contact centers have to go the long route and set up multiple back-up sites and this costs big too. Your PLDT OnCall hosted contact center's network based solution inherently supports your business' seamless operations with no hiccups. Can there be any network larger and more solid than PLDT?

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POC tackles which NSAs to prioritize

THE INITIAL STEP TOWARD CHOOSING the 10 sports to be lavishly funded begins when the Philippine Olympic Committee general assembly convenes today at the Cafe J in Pasay Road, Makati.

POC secretary general Steve Hontiveros said national sports associations will be asked to submit their reports, not only about their performance during the 23rd Southeast Asian Games but also their recommendation for the chosen 10 list.

The 10 NSAs will be given focus of attention and budget from the government and private sector as ordered by President Macapagal- Arroyo in line with the quest to win the country's first ever Olympic gold medal in Beijing.

From the NSAs' recommendations, according to Hontiveros, the POC will start its own study to come up with the list of the priority sports disciplines.

Also on tap is the NSAs' SEA Games report. It will be their first meeting since the triumphant SEA Games staging last December where the country won 113 golds, 86 silvers and 92 bronzes to capture the overall title.

There will also be discussions on the country's preparation for the Doha Asian Games this December where the Philippines hopes to surpass its three-gold haul in Busan, Korea.

Whatever will be agreed upon in the meeting will then be discussed in the NSAs' consultative meeting on Friday. *Marc Anthony Reyes*

I'm the storm across the Pacific—Pacquiao

IT's time to relax at his old haunt for Manny Pacquiao. RECAH TRINIDAD

By Recah Trinidad

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA—A VICTORIOUS warrior returned to his old bed at the Vagabond Inn here in Hollywood, lay down on it and declared: "I'm the storm across the Pacific."

The hero's name is Manny Pacquiao, the most famous living Filipino, who boxed his way to supreme stardom in Las Vegas Saturday night.

He scored a big revenge by taking the head of a proud Aztec warrior via a 10th-round stoppage inside the boxing ring at the Thomas and Mack Center, with the whole boxing world in attendance in Las Vegas.

Pacquiao, 27, did a feat equal to that of Lapu-Lapu, revered as the first Filipino hero, by beating the great pugilist Erik Morales.

With the win, Pacquiao avenged a previous points defeat to Morales and also retold the gallantry of the Filipino soldiers in Bataan.

Before him, there were other great Filipino ring warriors like Pancho Villa and Gabriel "Flash" Elorde, who made the Filipino proud.

With his screaming win, Pacquiao also succeeded in sending the timely message that the Pinoy can do a lot better than just clean tables and wash dishes all over the world.

The great thing about Pacquiao is that Morales had manhandled him like a poor, mindless servant when they first clashed inside the boxing ring

I'M THE/ A24

La Salle officials split on UAAP pullout

By Jasmine W. Payo

LA SALLE OFFICIALS ARE EXPECTED TO be split down the middle when they convene today in a board meeting to discuss the school's planned pullout from next year's basketball competitions in the UAAP.

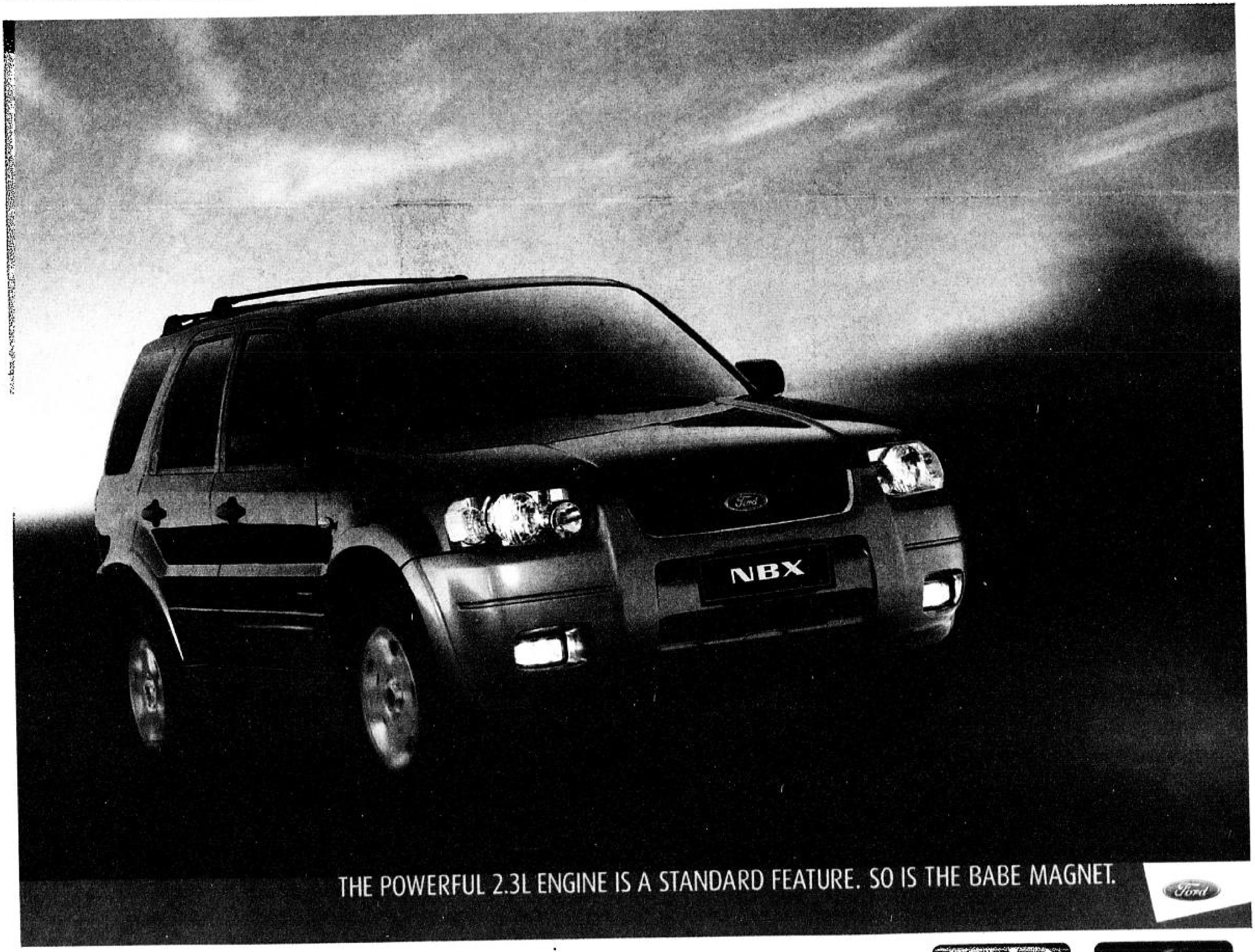
Sources said the Taft-based university, which got caught up in a recruitment controversy over two ineligible players, continues to back a plan for La Salle to file a voluntary leave of absence from hoop competitions to start instituting reforms in its basketball infrastructure.

In past statements, executive vice president Dr. Carmelita Quebengco hinted of the university's plan to take a voluntary leave starting this year "to institute internal reforms."

However, La Salle continued to compete in second-semester sports this month. School authorities drew a proposal, instead, to take a voluntary leave only from the basketball tournament.

Sources said that La Salle officials remain divided over the move since it would put on hold the amateur careers of their prized senior players and could also jeopardize the university's recruitment program.

By February, the UAAP fact-finding committee is expected to wrap up its investigation on the eligibility scandal involving Archers Mark Benitez and Tim Gatchalian.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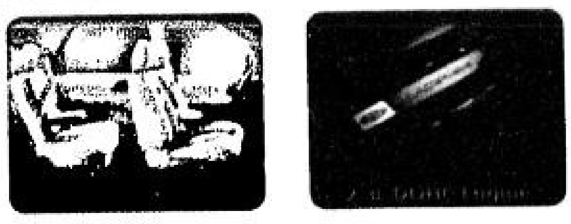
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Pacquiao's win eases MVP pain

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

AS VIEWERS inside the SM Cinema 3 rejoiced after Manny Pacquiao was officially declared winner by TKO over Mexican Erik Morales last Sunday, my mind drifted to Smart Communication's Manny V. Pangilinan who had sponsored the Pacquiao fights ever since I could remember.

Only the night before, MVP was in the throes of depression, his vaunted Talk and Text ballclub eliminated by the up and coming Air 21 Express from the semifinal round of the PBA SanMig Fiesta Cup.

What hurt most was the fact that the ouster was not a fluke. Air 21 had beaten TnT thrice in 5 games.

Since he took over the Moro Lorenzo franchise some years back, MVP has spared no effort nor expense to make his team highly competitive, reason why the Phone Pals' below par performance was a big letdown.

I wondered though, if the Pacquiao victory had somewhat obliterated the previous night's heartbreaker.

* * *

"Absolutely!" was MVP's cheerful text reply.

"Pacquiao's victory was simply magnificent, a superb display of pure Filipino talent on the world stage. It assuaged the pain of the TnT ouster, which was disappointing to say the least," he said.

MVP watched the fight from his PLDT office in Makati. He took the first flight to Hong Kong the following day, feeling a lot more lighthearted since Saturday night.

Meanwhile, PBA vice chairman Ricky Vargas made a silent wish which only I could hear for now.

"I wish every player in our team could have the heart and spirit of Manny Pacquiao," Ricky said.

* * *

I was expecting to bump into Tanduay president/COO Wilson Young at SM Cinema 3 which was reserved by Solar Sports for VIPs and the media, but I didn't see him.

Tanduay being a major sponsor of the fight, I figured Wilson might have flown to Las Vegas to watch the fight live.

When I got in touch with him the following day though, I found out that he was just here in Manila and had monitored the match from his home.

"Delayed *yung* coverage on television but friends from as far as Europe, America and China kept me updated. They also thanked Tanduay for sponsoring this epic bout. *Sabi nga nung isa, huwag daw akong mag-*worry *dahil talo ng* rum *ang* tequila. *Tama nga siya,*" Wilson said.

* * *

In his bout with Thai boxer 3K Battery which was held at The Fort in Taguig, Metro Manila, I remember seeing a Red Bull logo tattooed on Pacquiao's left upper arm, the same arm that knocked out the Thai opponent in the fourth round, if I'm not mistaken.

This tattoo was missing in his last two fights. Curious, I called Photokina's Raffy Casyao to ask if Manny had undergone a skin graft to erase the tattoo, probably to give way to a new sponsor.

According to Raffy, that was not a permanent tattoo. It was just Henna. "*Pero kahit hindi* permanent *yung* arm logo, Manny remains a regular Red Bull drinker, *kaya nga* we sent him a big pack in Las Vegas."

* * *

Raffy's boss George Chua, couldn't be more thrilled with the latest Pacquiao triumph.

"Even before the fight, I felt deep down in my heart that Manny would win. The few times we met in the office, I could tell *dugong* champion *siya* because of his positive attitude, principles and fear of God. Manny is a true winner, *kaya kahit sino ang bumangga, GIBA*! My congratulations to the country's greatest source of pride," George said.

* * *

HOOPVINE: Harbour Centre owner Mikee Romero, who watched the Pacquiao-Morales fight at SM Cinema 3 with his grandpa Miguel Lagman, who raised him, his uncle and his father-in-law, declared Jan. 22 "National Pacquiao Day"… Boxing fan Teddy Reynoso said "Supacman has more impact than 'Super Pacman'"…. Is this for real? The POC has taken a hands-off stance on the restructuring of the BAP, to get the Philippines back in the good graces of the FIBA. Sounds too good to be true but BAP president Joey Lina said it's for real.

Barako eye series equalizer vs Gins

By June Navarro

GAMES TODAY (*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:40 p.m.—Barangay Ginebra vs Red Bull Barako
7:35 p.m.—Purefoods vs Air21
Game 1—Purefoods d. Air21, 94-89; Barangay Ginebra d. Red Bull Barako, 105-100

NO TEAM FEELS AT home whenever it tangles with Barangay Ginebra. And Red Bull Barako is no exception.

The Bulls seek an equalizer against the charismatic Kings today in Game 2 of the San Mig Coffee-PBA Fiesta Conference semifinal series at the Araneta Coliseum, knowing very well that their foes will be enjoying the loud support of a loyal crowd.

"It's like playing away from home," said Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao of the game at the Big Dome, which is expected to be bursting at the seams anew with Ginebra fans.

"Nevertheless, we're very confident with the ability of the team," Guiao added. "It's just a matter of getting the proper mind-set and adjustment."

Air21 coach Bo Perasol's concern, on the other hand, is how to shake off the fatigue that is slowly creeping into his team in its own semifinal match against Purefoods.

"I hope to bring back the energy and enthusiasm of the team," said Perasol. The Express played nine games in 15 days, including a three-game stretch in as many days capped by their Game 1 defeat Sunday against the well-rested Giants.

And then there is that one major concern: Injuries.

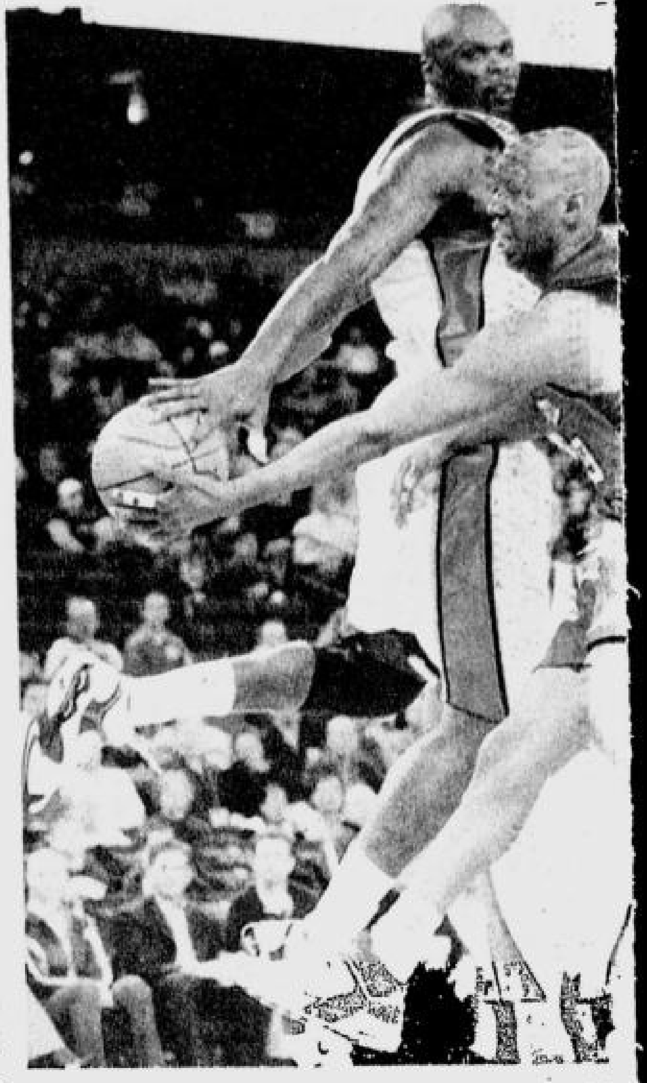
"It will always be a mental game but injuries are one of the most important tangibles in the series," said Perasol following Ronald Tubid's severe sprain that could force the explosive player to sit out Game 2.

Not that Purefoods was spared. Paul Artadi also twisted his ankle while James Yap is trying to recover from a sprain he suffered weeks ago.

"Injuries will certainly be a factor," Guiao admitted. "If you stay away from it, it's going to be a plus."

The Kings gun for a 2-0 lead against a healthy Red Bull Barako squad without back-up center Andy Seigle, who went under the knife to mend a hurting left ankle that could take six months to heal.

"It's difficult without Andy and the first game without him is an indication of how close the series will be," said Barangay Ginebra coach Siot Tanquingcen.



LOS Angeles' Sam Cassell (19) passes the ball around the Adonel Foyle in their NBA game. The Clippers won, 96-9

PBA imposes fines on erring players, off

By June Navarro

WITH THINGS GOING OUT OF HAND in one semifinal game, with fines handed out here and there and with the intensity level of games reaching feverish pitch, all the coaches of teams still seeing action in the San Mig Coffee-PBA Fiesta Conference are asking for just one thing.

"We've been dishing out our best on the court," said Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao yesterday. "Those top-notch games should be complemented by topnotch officiating."

At the heels of the request came the fines handed out by the commissioner's office on players and team officials who were involved in a skirmish in Game 1 of the Purefoods-Air21 match won by the Giants, 94-89.

Air21's Gary David and Marquin Chandler of Purefoods, chief protagonists during the third-quarter commotion, were assessed P5,000 each while Air21 playmaker Wynne Arboleda was asked to shell out P4,600 being a fifth-time offender since the conference began.

Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio got P5,000 for entering the court but coach Bo Perasol of Air21 absorbed a heavier fine of P10,000 for committing a technical offense of similar degree for the second time around.

"There was much ado about nothing," said PBA Commissioner Noli Eala after getting
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CHARITY CHALLENGE: HSBC CEO Warner Manning is challenging top businessmen and athletes to a triathlon at the Manila Polo Club on Feb. 4 to raise funds for the Children's Hour. First row (from left): Nona Torres, Ernie Lopez, Tricia Chiongbian, Fred Uytengsu, Larry Ocampo. Second row (from left): Art Tan, Fernando Zobel, Jon Jon Rufino, Warner Manning, Jay-jay de Ocampo

Manila unveils sports program

MANILA SPORTS COUNCIL (MASCO) CHIEF Arnold "Ali" Atienza expressed high hopes for the city's youth and future in sports as he unveiled yesterday the city govern ment sports arm's plans and programs for the year.

According to the son of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, first in the Masco's list is the Zonal Development Program "MY Games on the Road"—a weekly multi-sports activity staged in all the 897 barangays throughout the capital city starting Jan. 28. Also to be held is the year-round Officials and Athletes Training Seminar.

Next is the 17-under Kasibulan Football tournament on Feb. 18 and 19 at the Rizal Park organized by the Masco in cooperation with the Philippine Football Federation.

Preparations are also underway for the staging of the sixth edition of the Manila Open Taekwondo Championships on March 5 at the San Andres Sports and Civic Center in Malate.

"The Manila Open has served as a national level grassroots development program and has featured the best jins not only from the city but from all over the country," said Atienza, a former Asian taekwondo champion who is also a newscaster in IBC channel 13's Express Balita.

Also set in March is the Mayor Lito Atienza Golf Cup, a fund-raising project to benefit veteran marathoners Roy Vence and Cristabel Martes, who both earned a stint in the prestigious 110th Boston Marathon on April 17 from the Masco by winning the 42-km run of the 3rd Manila Marathon last year.

The fifth edition of the Manila Youth Games (MY Games), which is expected to showcase about 10,000 of the Big City's best 17-under athletes who will vie for top honors in 14 sports, will be held from April 2-9 at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

To coincide with the week-long celebration of the Araw ng Maynila, the Masco has scheduled the 6th Mayor's Cup Swimming Championships on June 24 at the Rizal Memorial Swimming Stadium, as well as the 4th Manila Marathon on June 25 on an out-and-back course that starts at the Rizal Park and pierces through the city's major thoroughfares, commercial districts and historical landmarks.

La Salle gains ground in interscholastics golf

LA SALLE EXPLOITED THE ABSENCE OF ATENEO's top gun to seize the lead in college play and set the pace in two other divisions after the penultimate round Monday of the sixth Samsung Interscholastic golf championship at the Tagaytay Highlands and Midlands Golf Club courses.

Oliver Gan netted 52 points while Justin Limjap and Marlo Capinianes each delivered 49 as La Salle, down by eight before the round, outscored their arch rivals by 19 (150-131) to storm ahead by 11 with a 36-hole aggregate of 283.

After leading the Eagles to an eight-point lead in Round 1, Escalona did not play and the trio of Kevin Lachica, Don Padilla and Ramon Garcia failed to stop the La Salle onslaught. Lachica had 45, Padilla 44 and Garcia 42 for a 272 aggregate.

La Salle-Greenhills got a big round from defending overal l individual champ Miko Yee who matched par 72 for 54 allowing his team to keep a nine-point lead in boys high school at 277. Other scorers for LSGH were Marvin Mendoza with 43 and Alan Guy with 42.

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Diamond Sky (3), Classy Babe (5), Cunning Eagle (7), Kitana (1)

Race 2—(Qrt/Tri)—Long Nose Hawk (6), Summer Rain (2), Classy Pages (8), Jetprop/Pure Energy (7)

Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Look of Love (6), Silver Eagle (8), Gelay's Charm (2), Banknet (4)

Race 4—(Penta/Tri)—Don Ramon (14), Dashing (4), Yao Man (11), Streisand (11), Western Dancer (5)

Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—Speed King (5), Rockwell (6), Five O'Clock (1), Sound Value (4)

Race 6—(Penta/Tri)—Mefcurian (2), Mas Que Nada (3), Stradivarius (1), El Love Senora (6), King Yoji (4)

Race 7—(Qrt/Tri0—El Cid (2), Earth Angel (5), Collective Dreams (1), Divine Tonight (3).

Race 8—(Penta/Tri)—Moab (7), Aliwalas (6), Vickyval (8), Lord of All (1), Kalmia (5)

Race 9—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—My Sheikh (7), Hurry Prince (14), Federal Court (11), Sir Benjo (12), Strong Colony (1), Extreme Romance (6).

SPORTSWATCH

2nd Blas F. Ople golf tournament

SAMAHANG PLARIDEL AND THE BLAS F. OPLE POLICY CENTER AND TRAINING INSTITUTE announce the holding of the 2nd Blas F. Ople Golf Memorial Tournament on Feb. 3 at the Camp Aguinaldo Golf Course in Quezon City. Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Rafael Seguis, head of the tournament committee, said the event coincides with the 79th birthday of the late foreign affairs secretary. Proceeds from this tournament will go to the Blas F. Ople Journalism and IT scholarship program for children of retired and working Filipino journalists. Call 339-1768, 339-2749 or 09155408356 c/o Fort Jose.

GCAP 5-cock derby begins today

THE SECOND LEG OF THE GENTLEMEN COCKERS ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPpines (GCAP) 5-cock derby gets under way today at the air-conditioned San Juan Co seum. Sponsor is Sagupaan Complexor 3000. With more than 80 fights lined up, th derby will start at 5 p.m. Five American cockers, who also competed in the NCA Wo Championship Derby last week are seeing action today: famous Sweater specialist Bruce Barnette, Jim Batiea of Sunset Recreational Club, Bryan Cochran, Jason Campbell and Crow Grave. For inquiries, call 722-7366 and 7255369.

Fastest Win event starts Sunday

EASY-TO-WIN PRIZES ARE AT STAKE IN ROLIGON MEGA COCKPIT'S NEW HACKFIGHT format and Fastest Win event, which will start on Sunday. For the Fastest Win event, a bonu of P5,000 will be given to the winner after every four fights. Entry fee is P500. The first 20 w ners in the regular backfight will get a bonus of P1,000 each. Meanwhile, participants who v compete in the "16th Anniversary 6-cock derby" on Jan. 21, Feb. 2, 4, 7 and 9 are requeste submit their entries a day before the event. Call 851-2275, 833-1638 and 852-9812 for deta

Super Pacman joins PCCA tourney

SUPER PACMAN, THE FAVORITE ENTRY NAME OF BOXING CHAMPION MANNY PACQUI is one of the confirmed bets in the Pasay Cockpit Cockers Association (PCCA) 4-cock derby Friday at the Pasay City Cockpit. Backing up the event is Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Pacqui is one of the 32 regular members of PCCA, according to pit manager Eric dela Rosa. Also se field his entry is R. Pineda, solo champion in the recent NCA World Championship 8-cock de

Bata enjoys second wind with new vision

REYES

CUE MASTER EFREN "BATA" Reyes has a literally clearer vision in looking at the coming pro billiards season.

The 51-year-old Reyes, his eyesight restored to better than normal proportions, is enjoying the second wind of his fabled career and is aiming to dominate the pool scene yet again.

The easy-going, good-natured Reyes ended last season with a bang, sealing top rank in the United States circuit money race by winning $200,000 in the International 8-ball shootout in Orlando, Florida.

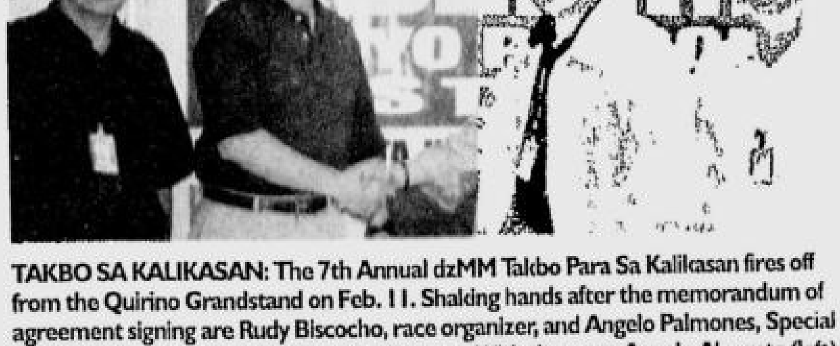
It was a victory that signaled Reyes' return to the top after months of mediocrity caused by chronic cueing elbow pain and deteriorating eyesight mainly because of age.

His dry eye symptoms and farsighted error of refraction and astigmatism were corrected by a short and painless procedure at the American Eye Center.

The Lasik Refractive Surgery, performed by Dr. Jack Arroyo, lasted only 20 minutes and gave the billiards ace "20/15" vision, a line better than the normal "20/20."

Reyes begged off from playing for the Philippines in the Southeast Asian Games last month because he was contemplating on going to the US to have his eyes treated.

With improved vision, "The Magician" sees nothing less than a dominating season again.



TAKBO SA KALIKASAN: The 7th Annual dzMM Takbo Para Sa Kalikasan fires off from the Quirino Grandstand on Feb. 11. Shaking hands after the memorandum of agreement signing are Rudy Biscocho, race organizer, and Angelo Palmones, Special Projects Director and dzMM Station Manager. With them are Angelo Almonte (left), Manager Radio Patrol, and Peter Musngi, VP Manila Radio Division.

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Harbour Centre's Reyes PBL Player of the Week

HE MAY BE OVERSHADOWED BY HIS FLASHY Fil-Am batchmates, but burly Rob Reyes of Harbour Centre still is a load to contend with in the PBL Heroes Cup.

With his effective post plays, Harbour Centre unexpectedly strung up six wins to claim a spot in the Final Four.

"He dominated the boards and he's a hard working player," said Harbour Centre coach Jorge Gallent of Reyes, the league's Player of the Week.

Reyes, though, has been showing lately that an offensive game is also among his arsenals.

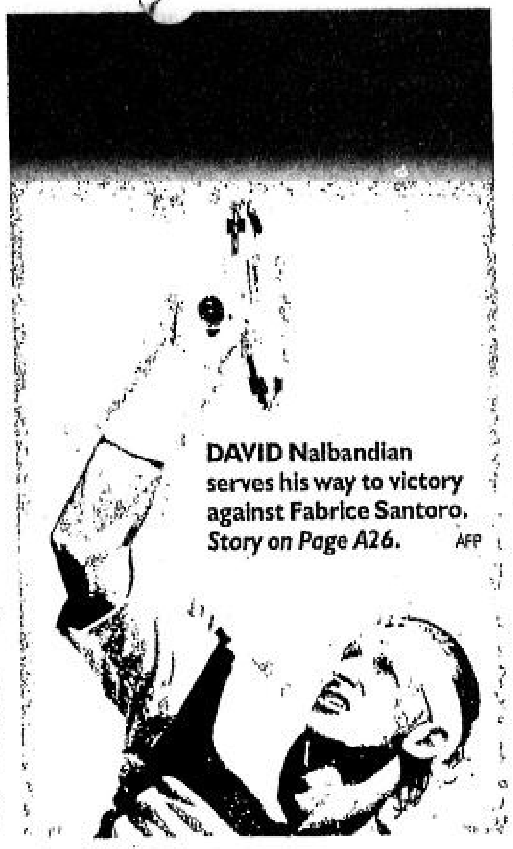
Reyes, a recruit from Florida, fired a team-high 13 points and grabbed 11 rebounds as Harbour Centre edged Hapee-PCU, 69-63, to claim the fourth spot and the twice-to-beat advantage in the quarterfinals. Reyes also added a steal and two blocks in the crucial win last Tuesday.

The 6-foot-7 center again stepped up on the offensive end, scoring 12 points on top of six rebounds, one steal and two blocks in the Portmasters' quarterfinal victory, 72-64, over the Teethmasters last Thursday. The sixth straight victory, the longest winning streak this conference, propelled the Portmasters to the semifinals after a sluggish 2-4 start in the elimination round.

The semifinal battle starts tomorrow with Rain or Shine facing Harbour Centre at 2 p.m. and Magnolia Ice Cream taking on Granny Goose in their 4 p.m. tussle.

Rain or Shine and Magnolia, the top-seeded squads, earned one-game incentives in the best-of-five series. Thus, they only need two victories, while Harbour Centre and Granny Goose must win thrice to advance to the finals.

Jasmine W. Payo



DAVID Nalbandian serves his way to victory against Fabrice Santoro. *Story on Page A26.* AFP

I'm the storm across the Pacific—Pacquiao

From page A23

last March.

But instead of sulking and giving up, Pacquiao took supreme sacrifices to transform himself into a masterful warrior.

The poor, plodding, predictable slugger turned himself into a sharp, masterful prince of the boxing world.

Pacquiao now makes quarters in a rich man's mansion here in Hollywood, kingdom of celebrities.

But as though reclaiming a mother's warm, assuring embrace, the boxing hero returned to the simple bed at room 120 of Vagabond on Vine Street, his host in his struggling years.

Pacquiao next takes a trip across the Pacific to the waiting embrace of an amazed and thankful nation when he takes a PAL flight to Manila where he's expected Friday.

RP Open Badminton first to adopt new scoring rule

THE PHILIPPINE OPEN BADMINTON CHAMPIonships will earn the distinction of being the first IBF (International Badminton Federation)-ranked tournamen t to implement the new scoring system when the event is held March 1-5 at the Philsports Arena in Pasig City.

The IBF Council has recently agreed to test the new rally point scoring system in IBF-sanctioned events, which carries world-ranking points, starting with the $120,000 Philippine Open.

Taufik Hidayat, the Indon ace who became the first player to win the Olympic men's singles and the world crowns, leads the crack foreign field in the RP Open where he is expected to share top billing with the likes of Lin dan, Pi Hongyan, Nathan Robertson, Gail Emms and Mia Audina Tjiptawan, who all saw action in last year's MVP Cup.

Under the new rules, a point will be scored every time a side serves and a match will now consist of three games up to 21 points (previously 15 points for men/doubles and 11 points for ladies in singles). If the score becomes 20 all, the side gaining a two-point lead first will win that game. In the event of 29-all game, the side scoring the 30th point will be declared the winner.

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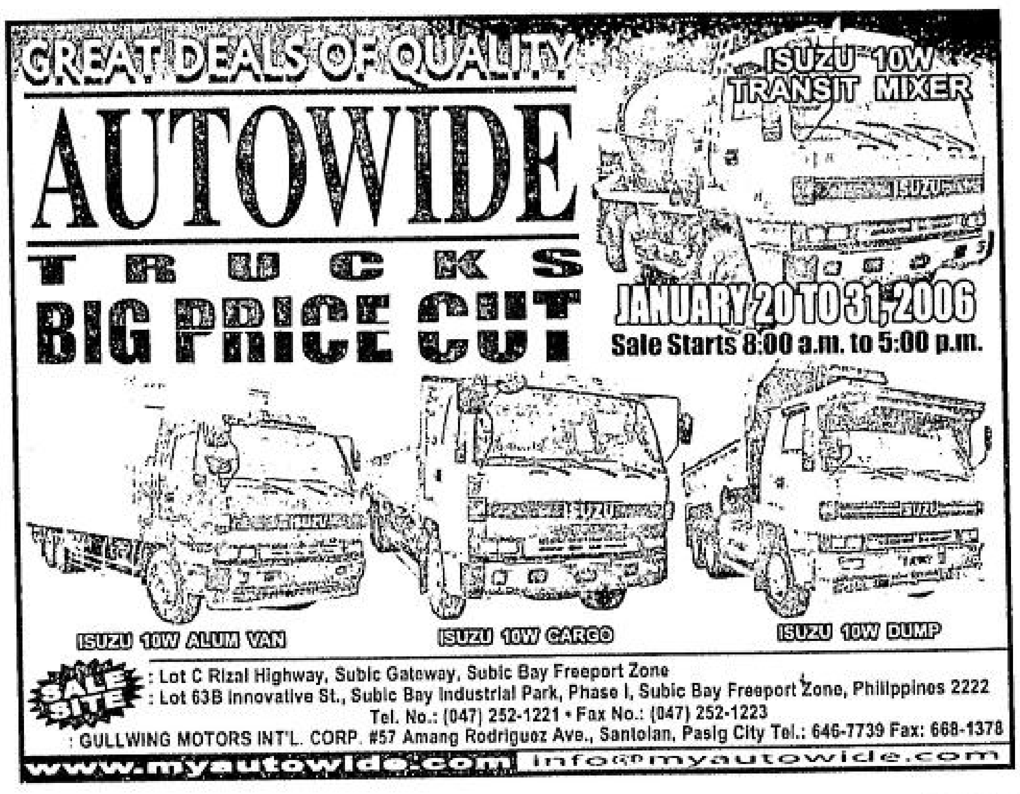

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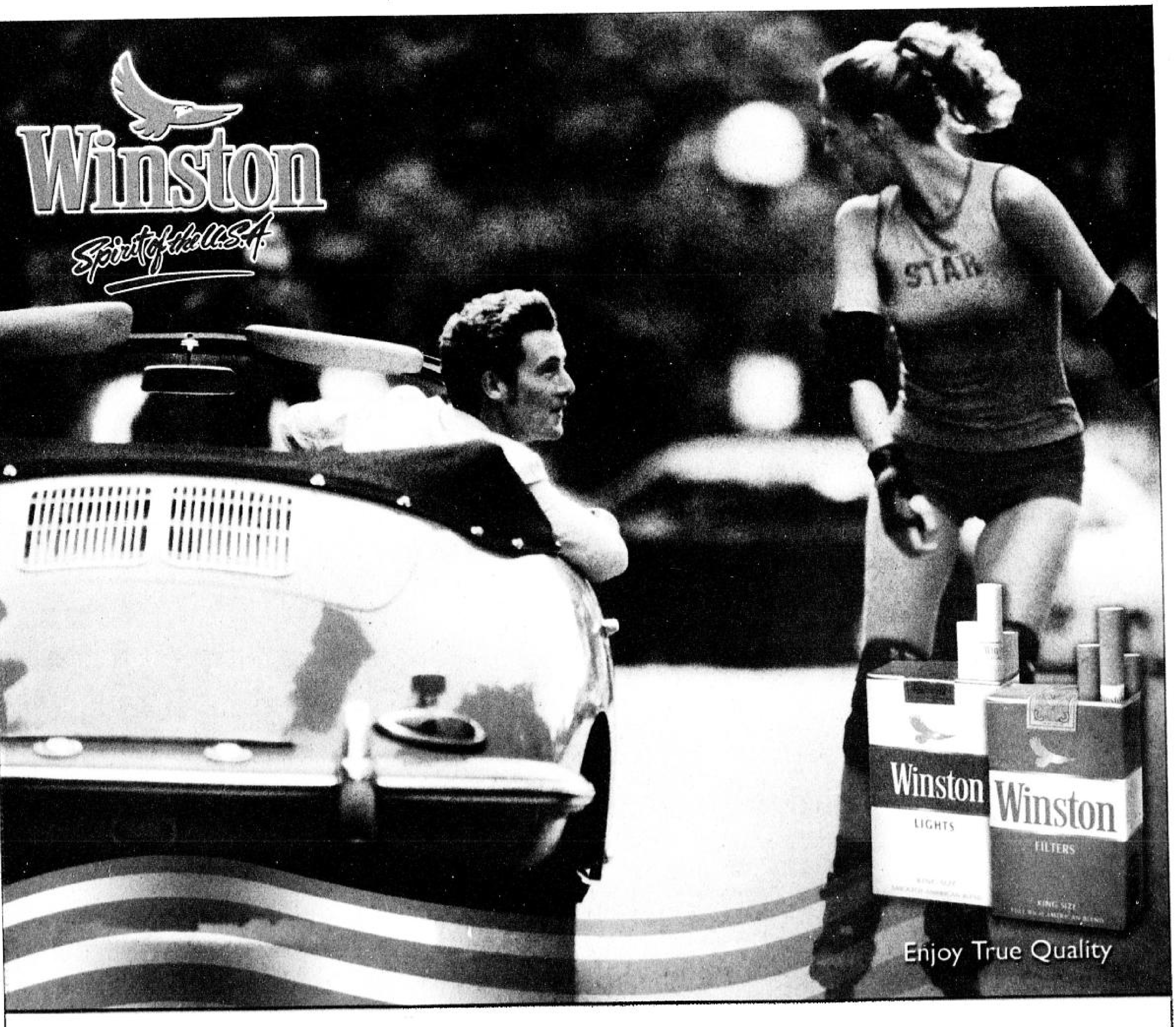

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Sharapova gets through tough quarters match

SHARAPOVA: It only gets tougher, AP

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—TOUGH wind, tough opponent, tough challenges: Maria Sharapova got through it all Tuesday to reach the Australian Open semifinals for the second straight year.

Demonstrating her refuse-to-lose mentality, Sharapova survived two set points in an error-filled tiebreaker after sixth-seeded Nadia Petrova twice served for the first set, holding on for a 7-6 (6), 6-4 win.

"It was definitely not easy," said the fourth-seeded Sharapova, the 2004 Wimbledon champion, who handled the wind and pressure better than Petrova in the all-Russian match. "It was a miracle when someone held serve."

It doesn't get any easier. Sharapova next faces eighth-seeded Justine Henin-Hardenne, who upset No. 1 Lindsay Davenport, 2-6, 6-2, 6-3, to advance also to the semifinals.

On the men's side, Masters Cup champion David Nalbandian reached the semifinals—completing a full set at the majors—when he overwhelmed veteran Frenchman Fabrice Santoro, 7-5, 6-0, 6-0.

The fourth-seeded Nalbandian was down a break in the 51-minute first set, but recovered to get back on serve before reeling off 14 consecutive games to close in one hour, 41 minutes.

Santoro, 33 and playing in the quarterfinals for the first time in 54 majors, won 34 points in the first set, but just 16 in the next two. From 5-5 in the first, Santoro never had a game point.

"After that first set, he just gave me a lesson," Santoro said. "I try many things, but he has the answer all the time. He does everything well. He just played great tennis, wonderful."

Nalbandian will play the winner between No. 7 Ivan Ljubicic and unseeded Marcos Baghdatis. *AP*

NFL: All eyes on Pittsburgh QB

DENVER—THE KID MAY BE THE pigskin answer to The Mailman.

According to Jerome Bettis, the Pittsburgh quarterback delivers.

Go back a year to the 2005 AFC Championship game. The Patriots were putting a hurtin' on the Pittsburgh Steelers, and the rookie quarterback and the veteran running back were commiserating on the sideline.

"It was in the middle of tears," Bettis recalled after yesterday's stunning 34-17 conquest of the Denver Broncos had sent the Steelers into Super Bowl XL. "He was boo-hooing and I was boo-hooing, and he said, 'Just come back. I'll get you to the Super Bowl. Just come back.'"

"It's been one of my driving forces all year, and I'm just glad I don't have to apologize," said Ben Roethlisberger of the incident.

Apologize? Not likely, now or ever again. Whatever personnel inadequacies the new AFC champs may have do not include the quarterback position. Yesterday, the 23-year-old was ruthlessly efficient at Invesco Field at Mile High, completing 21 of 29 passes for 275 yards, two touchdowns—one a highlight-reel special—and no interceptions.

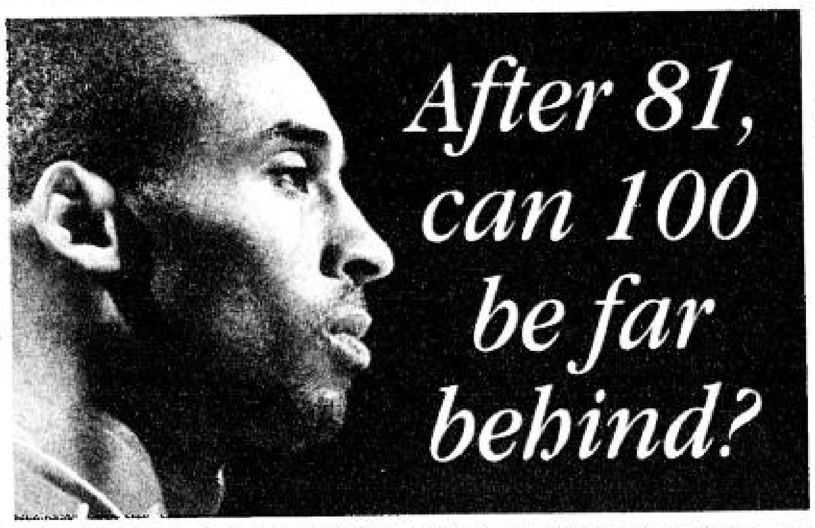
He also spiced up the plot with an artful 4-yard bootleg for the icing TD in the fourth quarter. No other quarterback in the league could have been of any more use to his team.

"I know he doesn't put up those kind of numbers like Peyton Manning and Tom Brady," said wide receiver Hines Ward. "But you need to mention him among the top quarterbacks in the NFL."

"He is a very composed young man," said Pittsburgh coach Bill Cowher. "The difference between him this year and last year is night and day."

"He made a proposal to me to get me the footballs of all these games," Bettis said. "He was going to get me the game ball of every game, and he's kept his promise. He promised me last year he was going to get me to the Super Bowl [this year], so he's 100 percent on his promises. So he's special in my book; I'll tell you that." *New York Times News Service*

After 81, can 100 be far behind?



LOS ANGELES—WILT CHAMBERLAIN's record 100-point NBA game seemed unreachable from the time he accomplished the feat nearly 44 years ago.

Perhaps it's not. Maybe Kobe Bryant can do it.

"I guess it's possible. I don't know, bro'. It's unthinkable," the Los Angeles Lakers' star said.

So was 81. At least before Bryant scored 28 of his team's 31 points in the fourth quarter on Sunday against the Toronto Raptors to reach the second-highest single-game total in NBA history.

Chamberlain scored 100 points when NBA basketball was a far different game, accomplishing the feat for Philadelphia against the New York Knicks at Hershey, Pennsylvania on March 2, 1962.

There was no 3-point shot—not that it would have mattered since Chamberlain was a 7-foot (2.14-meter) center who dominated the middle.

The 6-6 (1.98) Bryant made seven from outside the arc.

Defense was generally an afterthought when Chamberlain played, not that Toronto are much good at it now, ranking near the bottom of the league in that department.

Whatever the case, both performances were astonishing.

Chamberlain shot 36-of-63 from the field and 28-of-32 from the foul line while playing all 48 minutes. He averaged an NBA-record 50.4 points per game that season.

Bryant, playing a little less than 42 minutes, shot 28-of-46 from the floor including 7-of-13 from 3-point range, and 18-of-20 from the foul line. He raised his NBA-leading average to 35.9 points. If the season ended now, that would be the highest average since Michael Jordan scored 37.1 points per game 19 years ago.

Bryant appeared on his way to 80 a month ago, scoring a then-career high 62 in a one-sided win over Dallas. He sat out the fourth quarter because the outcome was decided after three.

Not so on Sunday. The Raptors led by as many as 18 in the third period, and that more than anything triggered Bryant's scoring explosion.

"We have four days off coming up here and I would be sick as a dog if we would have lost this game," he said.

In the second half, it was Bryant 55, Toronto 42.

After it was over, Bryant's cell phone rang. The caller was Lakers great Magic Johnson.

"For him to call me and tell me what a great game it was and how proud of me he is meant more to me than the 81 points," Bryant said. "That meant more to me than even the game itself because I idolized him as a kid." *AP*

COMPLETE NBA RESULTS: Atlanta 104, Indiana 94; Boston 91, New Orleans 78; Houston 97, Milwaukee 80; Utah 89, New Jersey 78; Denver 107, Toronto 101; LA Clippers 96, Golden State 93

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ENTERTAINMENT

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Birthday boy in Boys' Town

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Romy Homillada

MATINEE IDOL RICHARD Gutierrez could not hide his surprise when reporters and cameramen rushed to him as he stepped out of his van on Saturday afternoon.

He was at the Manila Boys' Town in Parang, Marikina City, to celebrate his 22nd birthday with the center's wards, mostly abandoned kids. He had not been told that members of the entertainment press would be covering the event.

Richard arrived at the 23-hectare complex at 3:30 p.m. He first visited the Girls' Home where 75 wards, ages 3-16, greeted him. Then he spent time at the center's Home for the Aged facility.

Afterwards, he hosted lunch and a magic show for the kids and handed out goodie bags.

"This is my first time in Boys' Town," said Richard after having lunch surrounded by the children. "Last year, I visited cancer patients at the PGH (Philippine General Hospital), but that was days before my birthday."

The Manila Boys' Town, run by the Manila city government's Department of Social Welfare, takes care of over 200 elders and 300 kids. Among the facilities are an elementary school and high school, a chapel and an infirmary.

"It feels good that I'm able to share my blessings with them. I'm able to make them happy," Richard said of his special birthday guests. "It's funny because some of the kids call me Aguiluz (his character in the movie 'Mulawin'); the others, Amante (one of two roles he portrays in the TV series, 'Sugo')."

The actor added: "I promise to do more charity work this year. I was supposed to organize a charity event a little bigger than this, but I got so caught up with my movie assignments that I ran out of time to prepare."

Richard is busy promoting his new film, Mac Alejandre's "I Will Always Love You," with Angel Locsin. He is also preparing to shoot the final episodes of "Sugo."

Richard and his twin brother, Raymond, threw a party for their friends at Richard's new condo unit in Taguig City that same night.

The twins handed out keys to the unit to

BIRTHDAY/A2-8

OPENING TODAY

Big Time

Stars Michael de Mesa, Nor Domingo, Winston Elizalde, Joanne Miller, Jamie Wilson
Directed by Mario Cornejo and Monster Jimenez

Two petty thieves (Domingo and Elizalde) team up with an aspiring starlet (Miller) and her junkie boyfriend (Wilson) for a fake kidnapping. The hapless gang incurs the ire of the addict's father, a ruthless crime lord (De Mesa). Hilarity and horrors result in equal parts. Rina Jimenez-David of the INQUIRER writes: "[The] slapdash casual air about the movie adds to the fun, drawing in the audience to its world of thwarted ambitions and delusional aspirations …" Tessa Jasminez of Variety: "[The] filmmakers were hailed for 'making a Tagalog movie that doesn't oversell a joke or rely on slapstick.' " Rated A by the Cinema Evaluation Board, it won Best Screenplay and Best Sound at the Cinemalaya Film Fest. At select SM Cinemas.

The Maid

Stars Alessandra da Rossi, Chen Shu Cheng, Hon Hui Fang, Benny Soh
Directed by Kelvin Tong

Shot entirely in Singapore and starring a Filipino actress in the title role, the film is steeped in Chinese superstitions and is earmarked as the city-state's entry to the Asian horror flick trend

OPENING/ A2-8

Umm...
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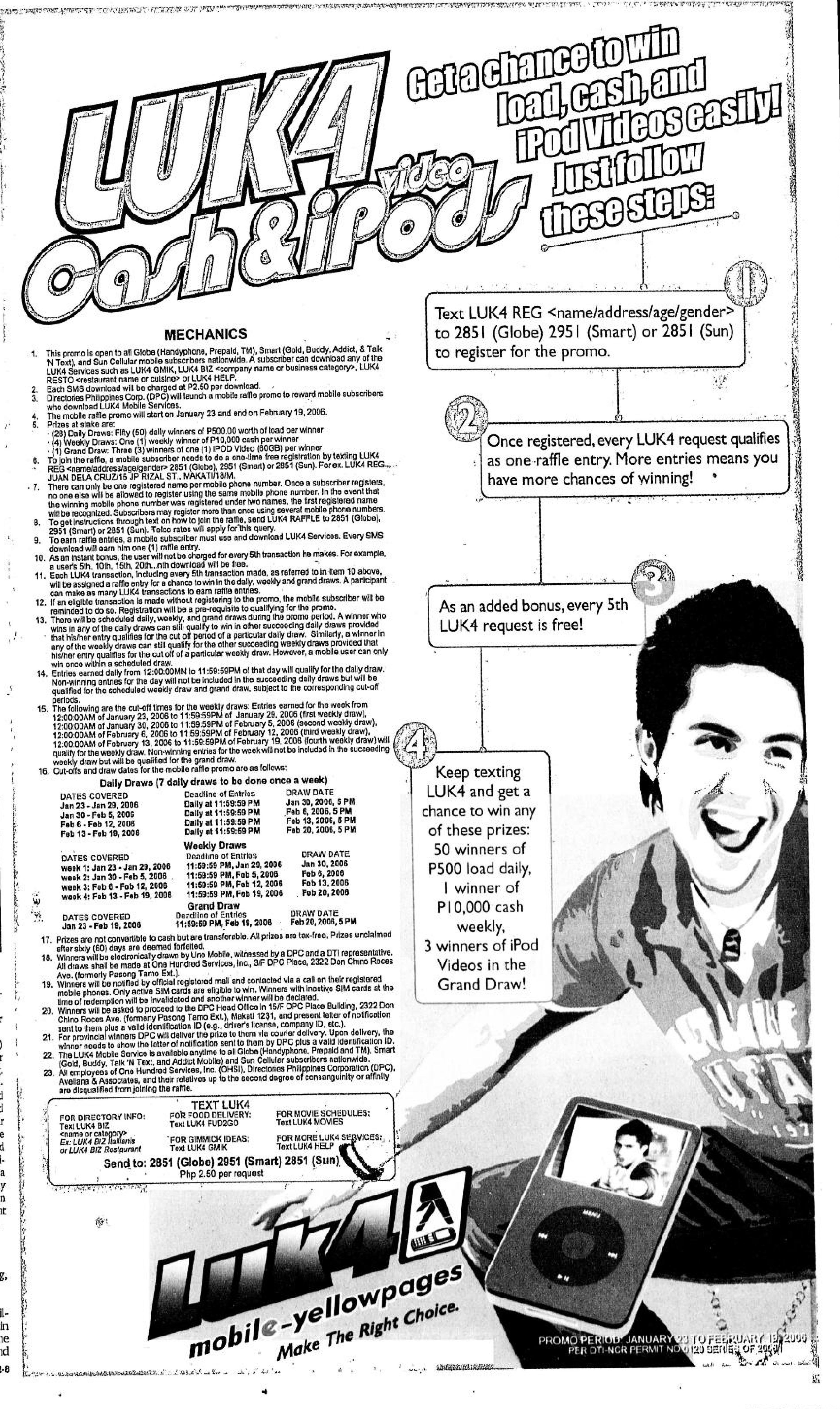

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3 As an added bonus, every 5th LUK4 request is free!

4 Keep texting LUK4 and get a chance to win any of these prizes: 50 winners of P500 load daily, 1 winner of P10,000 cash weekly, 3 winners of iPod Videos in the Grand Draw!

MECHANICS

1. This promo is open to all Globe (Handyphone, Prepaid, TM), Smart (Gold, Buddy, Addict, & Talk 'N Text), and Sun Cellular mobile subscribers nationwide. A subscriber can download any of the LUK4 Services such as LUK4 GMIK, LUK4 BIZ <company name or business category>, LUK4 RESTO <restaurant name or cuisine> or LUK4 HELP.
2. Each SMS download will be charged at P2.50 per download.
3. Directories Philippines Corp. (DPC) will launch a mobile raffle promo to reward mobile subscribers who download LUK4 Mobile Services.
4. The mobile raffle promo will start on January 23 and end on February 19, 2006.
5. Prizes at stake are:
   · (28) Daily Draws: Fifty (50) daily winners of P500.00 worth of load per winner
   · (4) Weekly Draws: One (1) weekly winner of P10,000 cash per winner
   · (1) Grand Draw: Three (3) winners of one (1) iPOD Video (60GB) per winner
6. To join the raffle, a mobile subscriber needs to do a one-time free registration by texting LUK4 REG <name/address/age/gender> 2851 (Globe), 2951 (Smart) or 2851 (Sun). For ex. LUK4 REG JUAN DELA CRUZ/15 JP RIZAL ST., MAKATI/18/M.
7. There can only be one registered name per mobile phone number. Once a subscriber registers, no one else will be allowed to register using the same mobile phone number. In the event that the winning mobile phone number was registered under two names, the first registered name will be recognized. Subscribers may register more than once using several mobile phone numbers.
8. To get instructions through text on how to join the raffle, send LUK4 RAFFLE to 2851 (Globe), 2951 (Smart) or 2851 (Sun). Telco rates will apply for this query.
9. To earn raffle entries, a mobile subscriber must use and download LUK4 Services. Every SMS download will earn him one (1) raffle entry.
10. As an instant bonus, the user will not be charged for every 5th transaction he makes. For example, a user's 5th, 10th, 15th, 20th...nth download will be free.
11. Each LUK4 transaction, including every 5th transaction made, as referred to in item 10 above, will be assigned a raffle entry for a chance to win in the daily, weekly and grand draws. A participant can make as many LUK4 transactions to earn raffle entries.
12. If an eligible transaction is made without registering to the promo, the mobile subscriber will be reminded to do so. Registration will be a pre-requisite to qualifying for the promo.
13. There will be scheduled daily, weekly, and grand draws during the promo period. A winner who wins in any of the daily draws can still qualify to win in other succeeding daily draws provided that his/her entry qualifies for the cut off period of a particular daily draw. Similarly, a winner in any of the weekly draws can still qualify for the other succeeding weekly draws provided that his/her entry qualifies for the cut off of a particular weekly draw. However, a mobile user can only win once within a scheduled draw.
14. Entries earned daily from 12:00:00MN to 11:59:59PM of that day will qualify for the daily draw. Non-winning entries for the day will not be included in the succeeding daily draws but will be qualified for the scheduled weekly draw and grand draw, subject to the corresponding cut-off periods.
15. The following are the cut-off times for the weekly draws: Entries earned for the week from 12:00:00AM of January 23, 2006 to 11:59:59PM of January 29, 2006 (first weekly draw), 12:00:00AM of January 30, 2006 to 11:59:59PM of February 5, 2006 (second weekly draw), 12:00:00AM of February 6, 2006 to 11:59:59PM of February 12, 2006 (third weekly draw), 12:00:00AM of February 13, 2006 to 11:59:59PM of February 19, 2006 (fourth weekly draw) will qualify for the weekly draw. Non-winning entries for the week will not be included in the succeeding weekly draw but will be qualified for the grand draw.
16. Cut-offs and draw dates for the mobile raffle promo are as follows:

Daily Draws (7 daily draws to be done once a week)

DATES COVERED	Deadline of Entries	DRAW DATE
Jan 23 - Jan 29, 2006	Daily at 11:59:59 PM	Jan 30, 2006, 5 PM
Jan 30 - Feb 5, 2006	Daily at 11:59:59 PM	Feb 6, 2006, 5 PM
Feb 6 - Feb 12, 2006	Daily at 11:59:59 PM	Feb 13, 2006, 5 PM
Feb 13 - Feb 19, 2006	Daily at 11:59:59 PM	Feb 20, 2006, 5 PM

Weekly Draws

DATES COVERED	Deadline of Entries	DRAW DATE
week 1: Jan 23 - Jan 29, 2006	11:59:59 PM, Jan 29, 2006	Jan 30, 2006
week 2: Jan 30 - Feb 5, 2006	11:59:59 PM, Feb 5, 2006	Feb 6, 2006
week 3: Feb 6 - Feb 12, 2006	11:59:59 PM, Feb 12, 2006	Feb 13, 2006
week 4: Feb 13 - Feb 19, 2006	11:59:59 PM, Feb 19, 2006	Feb 20, 2006

Grand Draw

DATES COVERED	Deadline of Entries	DRAW DATE
Jan 23 - Feb 19, 2006	11:59:59 PM, Feb 19, 2006	Feb 20, 2006, 5 PM

17. Prizes are not convertible to cash but are transferable. All prizes are tax-free. Prizes unclaimed after sixty (60) days are deemed forfeited.
18. Winners will be electronically drawn by Uno Mobile, witnessed by a DPC and a DTI representative. All draws shall be made at One Hundred Services, Inc., 3/F DPC Place, 2322 Don Chino Roces Ave. (formerly Pasong Tamo Ext.).
19. Winners will be notified by official registered mail and contacted via a call on their registered mobile phones. Only active SIM cards are eligible to win. Winners with inactive SIM cards at the time of redemption will be invalidated and another winner will be declared.
20. Winners will be asked to proceed to the DPC Head Office in 15/F DPC Place Building, 2322 Don Chino Roces Ave. (formerly Pasong Tamo Ext.), Makati 1231, and present letter of notification sent to them plus a valid identification ID (e.g., driver's license, company ID, etc.).
21. For provincial winners DPC will deliver the prize to them via courier delivery. Upon delivery, the winner needs to show the letter of notification sent to them by DPC plus a valid identification ID.
22. The LUK4 Mobile Service is available anytime to all Globe (Handyphone, Prepaid and TM), Smart (Gold, Buddy, Talk 'N Text, and Addict Mobile) and Sun Cellular subscribers nationwide.
23. All employees of One Hundred Services, Inc. (OHSI), Directories Philippines Corporation (DPC), Avellana & Associates, and their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining the raffle.

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AYALA CINEMAS

ROUNDUP

Vampires win!

LOS ANGELES—Golden Globe-winning films saw significant boosts at the weekend box office, but the action-packed vampire flick "Underworld: Evolution" was the top earner, debuting with $27.6 million in ticket sales.

The blood-drenched thriller, starring Kate Beckinsale and Scott Speedman, edged out last weekend's winning family fare, "Hoodwinked," according to studio estimates released Sunday.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at US and Canadian theaters:

1) "Underworld: Evolution," $27.6M; 2) "Hoodwinked," $11M; 3) "Glory Road," $9.1M; 4) "Last Holiday" $9.1M; 5) "Brokeback Mountain," $7.8M; 6) "Fun With Dick and Jane," $6.1M; 7) "The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," $6M; 8) "Hostel," $4.3M; 9) "The New World," $4.2M; 10) "End of the Spear," $4.2M. *AP*

BECKINSALE
in "Underworld"

Front-runner

LOS ANGELES—Director Ang Lee's gay-cowboy romance "Brokeback Mountain" solidified its status as the front-runner for Oscar glory on Sunday when it was named Best Picture of the year by the Producers Guild of America.

The other contenders were "Capote," "Walk the Line," "Good Night, and Good Luck" and "Crash." "Brokeback Mountain" led the pack last week at the Golden Globe Awards, another Oscar bellwether. *Reuters*

China for H'wood

HONG KONG—Action star Jet Li says that as China becomes a bigger market for Hollywood, more opportunities will be available to Chinese actors.

Li said that as the China box office continues to grow, "Hollywood will try its hardest to break into China, and then Chinese actors will have the opportunity to not just make action or martial arts movies, but also comedy, drama." Li spoke Sunday at a Hong Kong charity premiere for his new film, "Fearless." *AP*

'Crash' campaign

LOS ANGELES—Independent film studio Lionsgate, buoyed by surging acclaim for its racial drama "Crash," said it has sent more than 130,000 DVD copies to Hollywood insiders as part of an unprecedented Oscar campaign for the movie.

The huge scope of the "Crash" DVD mailing dwarfs the size of what most studios regard as a major Oscar "screener" blitz—typically running 12,000 to 20,000 copies.

Lionsgate's Tom Ortenberg said the campaign was especially important for a film like "Crash," a May release that is no longer in theaters. *Reuters*

'Geisha' ban

SHANGHAI—Hollywood's "Memoirs of a Geisha" has China censors stumped, with officials and state press saying Tuesday the film may be banned due to concerns it could rouse anti-Japanese sentiments.

Several state newspapers reported that the movie, directed by Rob Marshall and co-produced by Steven Spielberg, was scheduled for general release on Feb. 19 but had now been scrapped.

The main issue of concern is that two leading actresses who play geishas are Chinese, which could evoke memories of Japanese wartime aggression towards mainland women.

But regardless of whether the film is eventually approved, Chinese audiences will undoubtedly be able to watch it, as pirated DVD copies are already widely available. *AFP*

OPENS FEBRUARY 1
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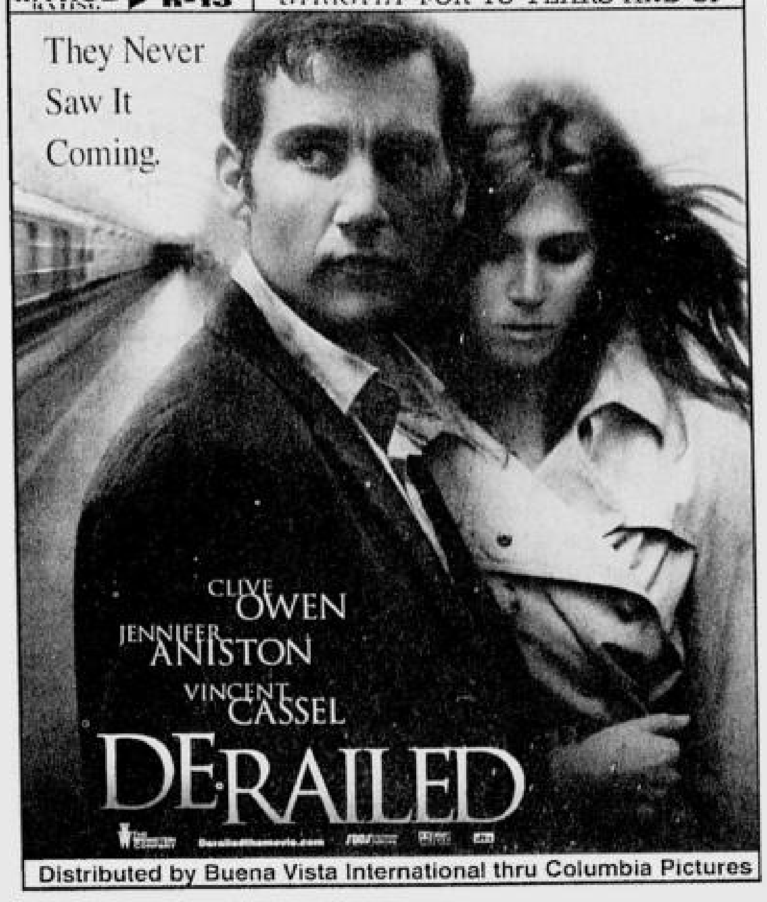

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Our Winter Love
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Unchained Melody
Graduation Day
No Other Love
You'll Never Walk Alone
The Wonder of You
Young Love
Love Is A Many Splendored Thing
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Walk On By
She Cried
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Portrait Of My Love
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You've Lost That Loving Feeling
Sealed With A Kiss
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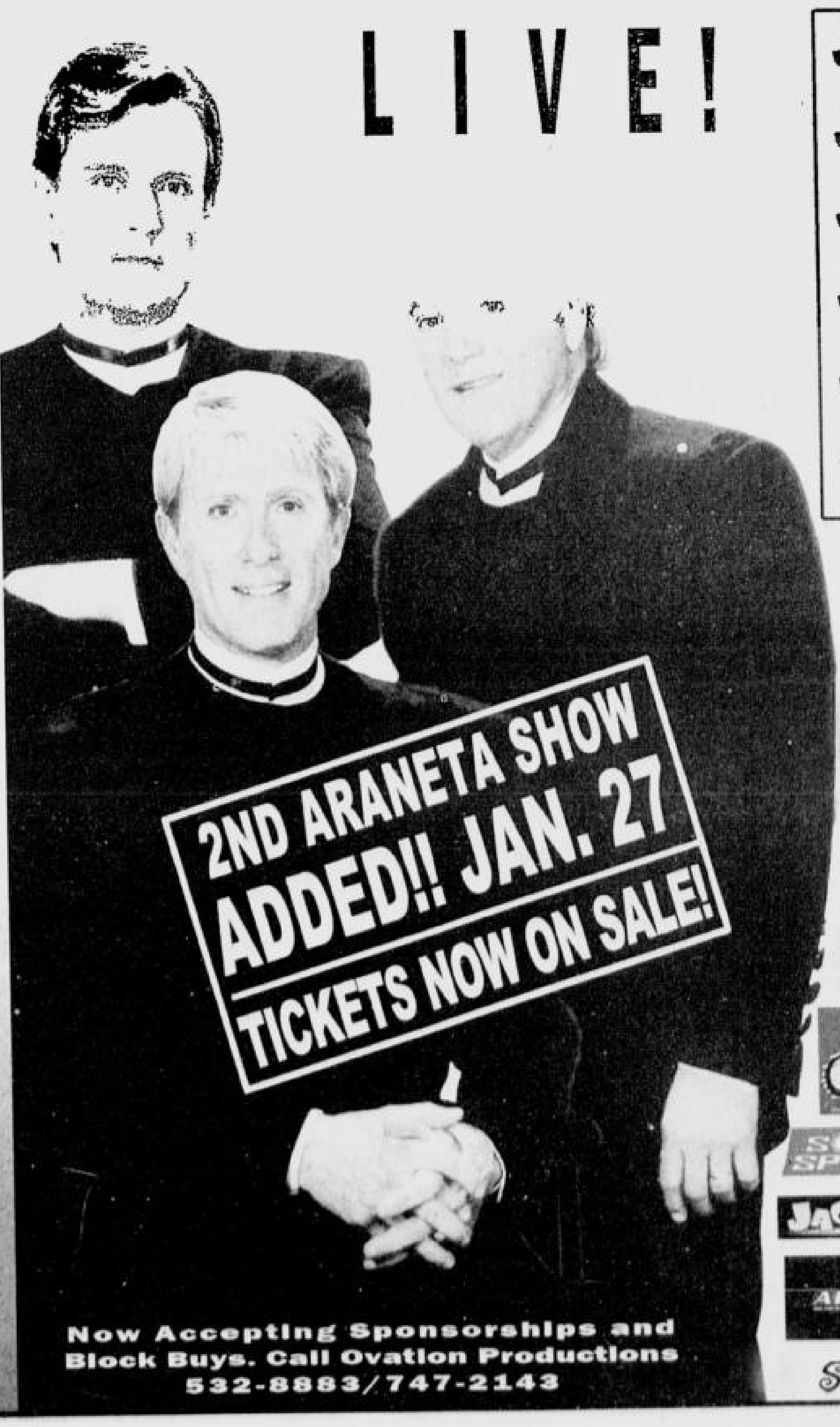

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Fitting tribute to Edsa Revolution

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE EDSA Revolution next month has prompted the Foundation for Worldwide People Power to produce a special TV documentary that pays fitting tribute to the landmark event.

Titled "Edsa 1986: Mga Tinig ng Himagsikan," the one-and-a-half-hour video documentary was produced especially for young people who were born after 1986, and thus know very little about the historic peaceful uprising that has made People Power a distinctly Filipino phenomenon, and our gift to the world.

FWWPP board chair **Eggie Apostol** shares that work on the important documentary began early last year, after the production team completed focus group discussions with 18- to 20-year-olds who were asked about their thoughts on Edsa 1.

Jim Paredes was chosen as main presentor because he was the ideal link to the younger generation, which is excitingly typified in the docu by co-host **Bianca Gonzalez.**

"Mga Tinig ng Himagsikan" features new on-camera interviews of key witness to the Edsa Revolution of 1986. Their names and the views they express are truly impressive.

They include **Silvestre Afable III, Ramon Farolan, Apa Ongpin, Avelino Razon Jr., Antonio Sotelo, Braulio Balbas,** Sisters **Terry** and **Pong,** Fr. **Catalino Arevalo, Salvador Escudero III, Lisandro Abadia, Lolita** and **Sarge Lacuesta, Gabe Mercado, Jake Almeda Lopez, Henry Omaga Diaz** and Bishop **Socrates Villegas.**

The production's research team even flew to the United States last October to interview Dr. **Alfred Macoy,** Ambassador **Stephen Bosworth** and **John Maisto.**

The documentary also makes use of rare archival footage obtained in the States from ABC News and CNN.

In addition, historians Dr. **Jose V. Abueva, Manuel Quezon III** and **Stephen Henry Totane** provide on-screen analysis.

A music video of "Pangarap Ko," a song composed and performed specially for this project by **Kitchie Nadal,** adds a youthful dimension to "Mga Tinig ng Himagsikan," which is directed by **Butch Nolasco.**

Do make it a point to view FWWPP's documentary when it airs next month. Even better, get the young people you know to watch it as well, because this special docu is especially for *them.*

'Lauds Seven'

A PRAYER concert will be held on Feb. 4 at the Cardinal Sin Center, Loyola House of Theology, Ateneo de Manila University, to launch "Lauds Seven," Jesuit Communications' new album of traditional music for meditation.

The album features Fr. **Arnel dC. Aquino,** SJ at the piano, with Himig Heswita and Friends.

FITTING/ A2-4

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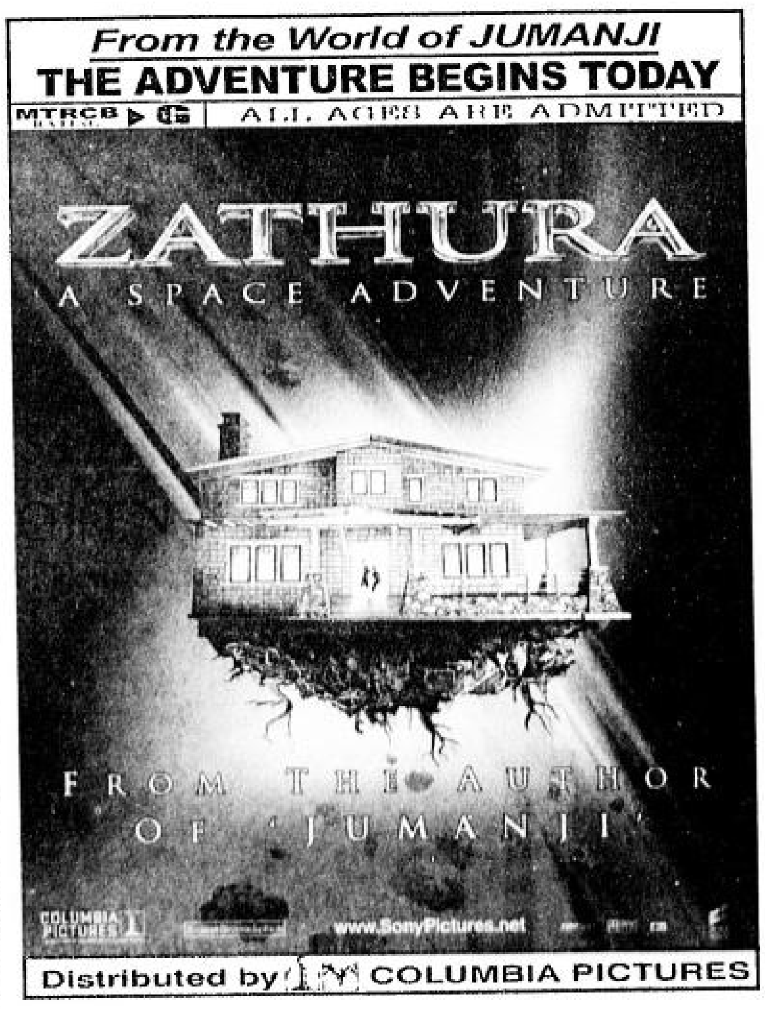
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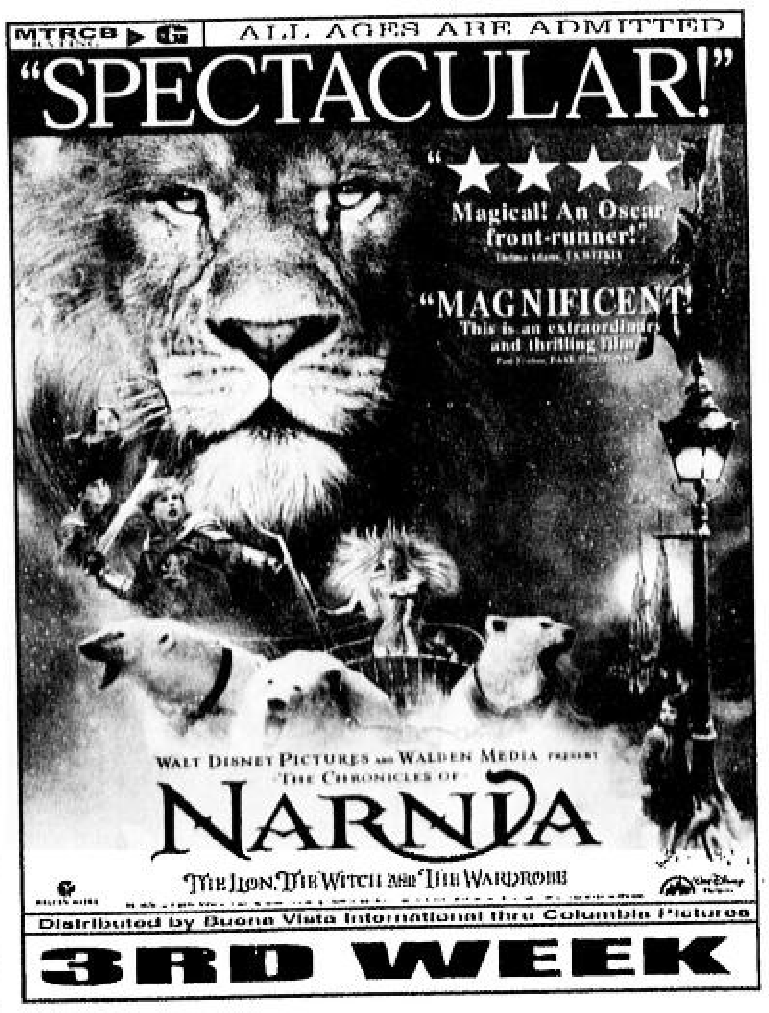
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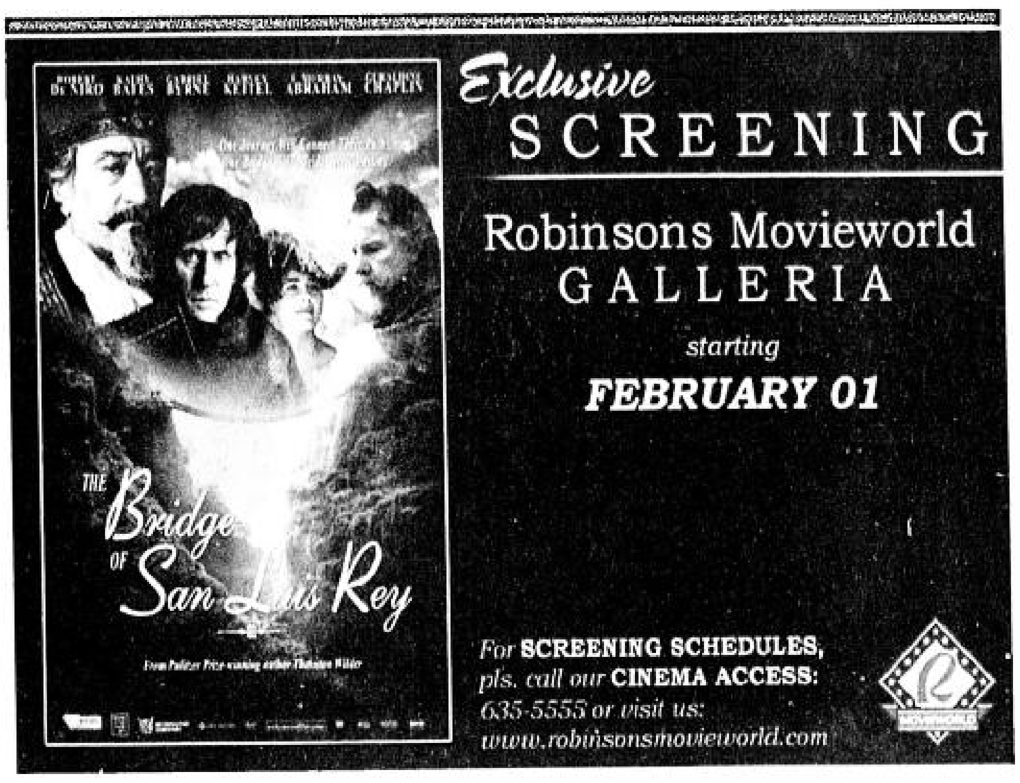
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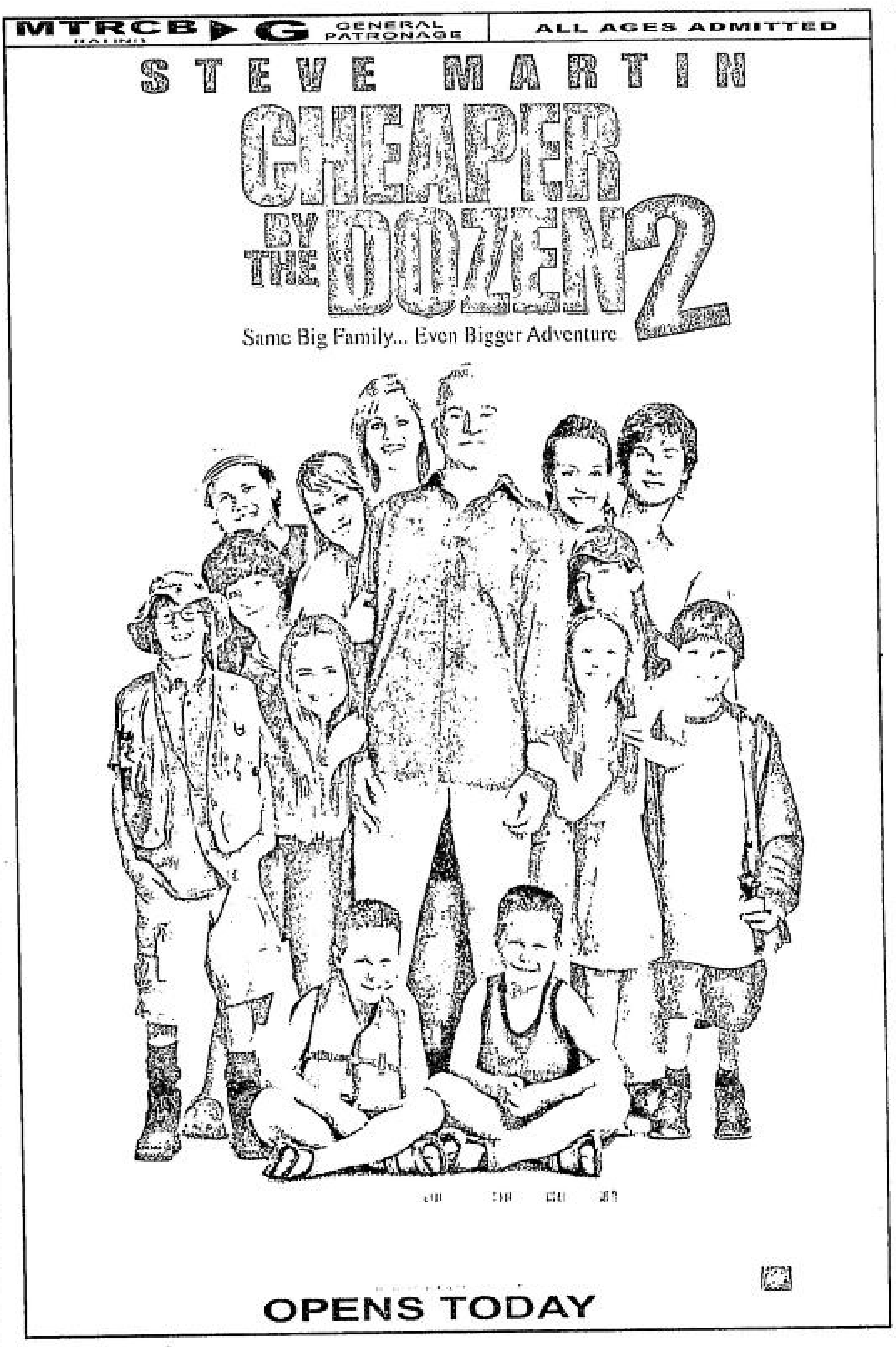
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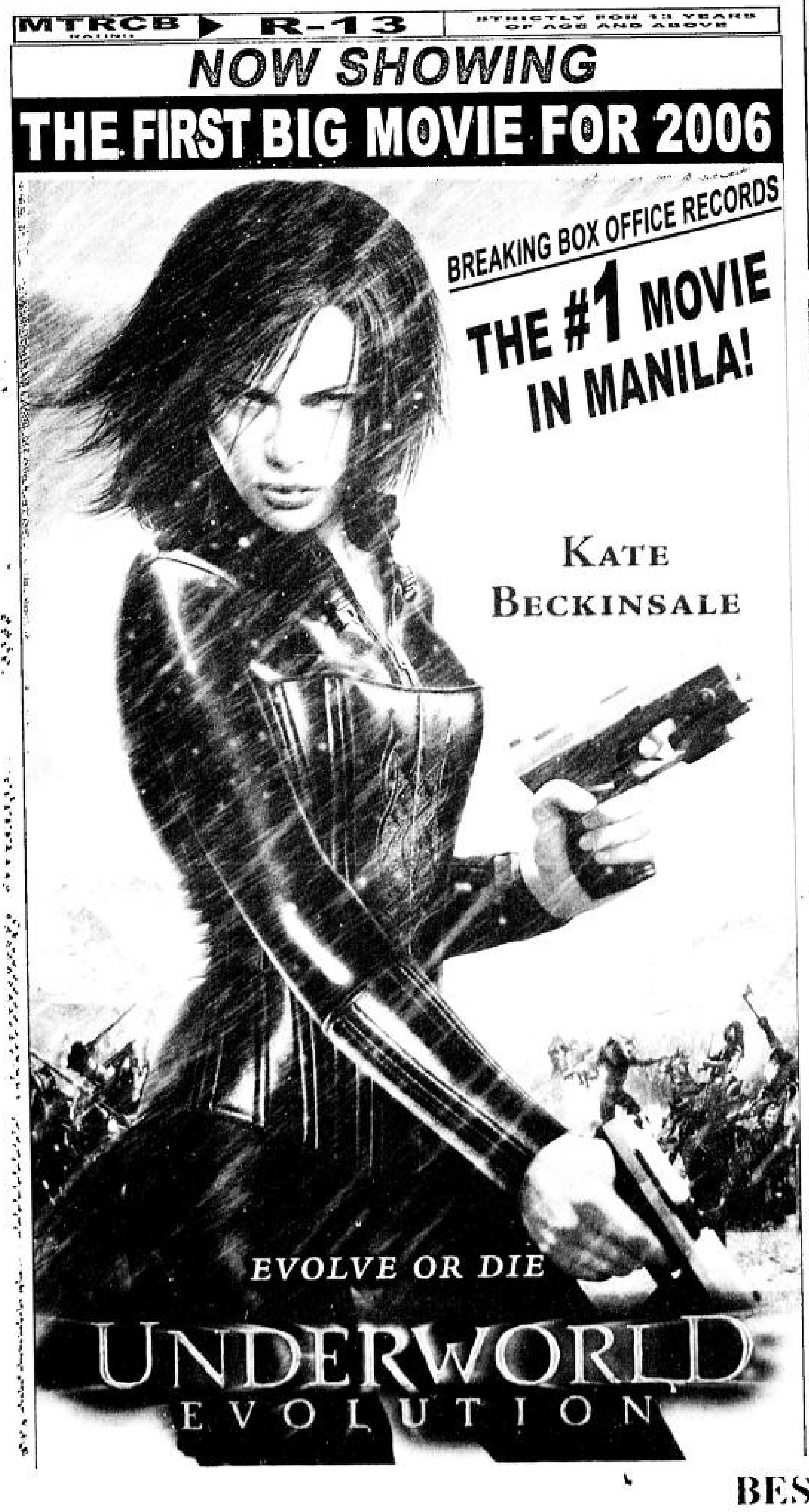
STEVE MARTIN

CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2

Same Big Family... Even Bigger Adventure

OPENS TODAY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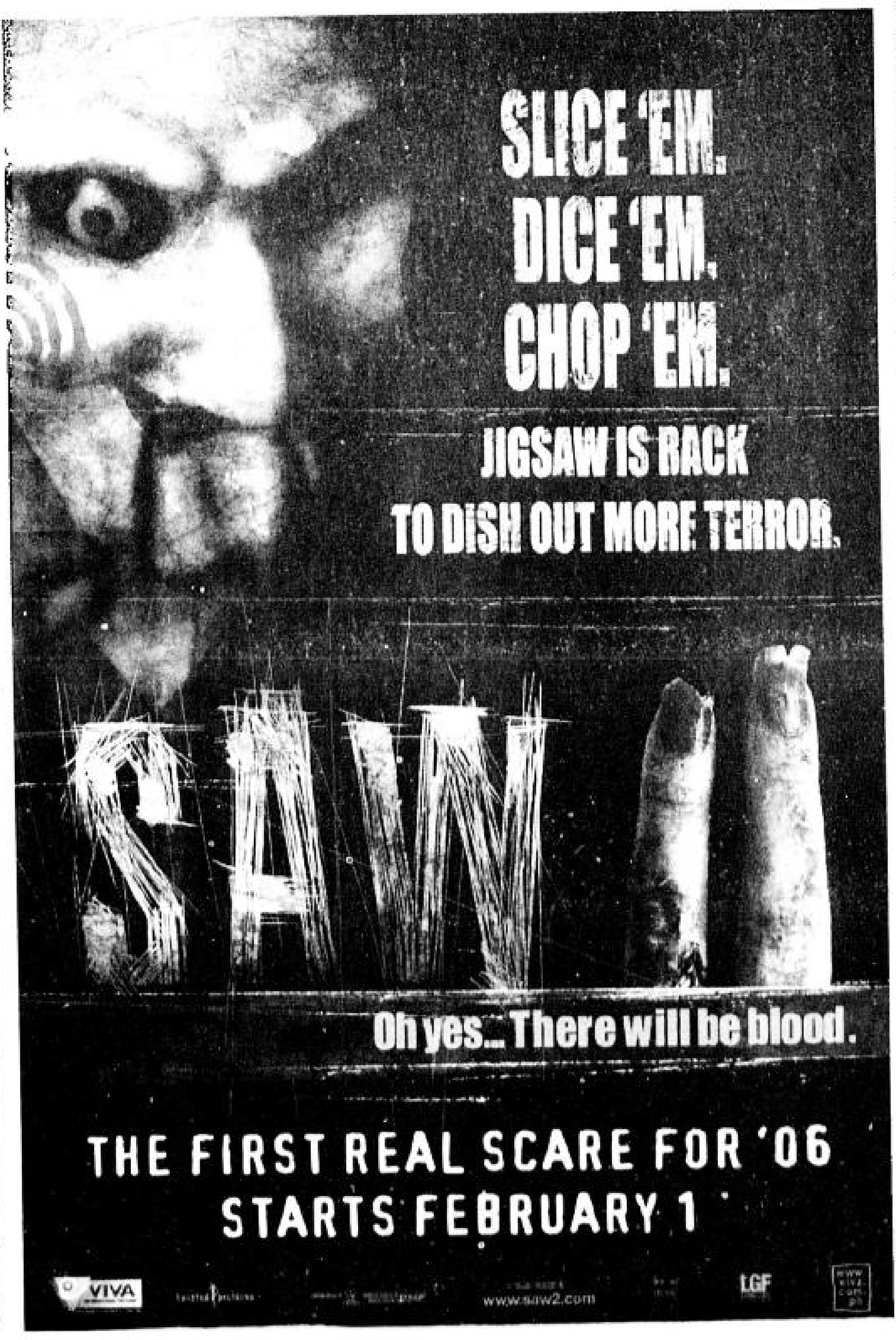
UNDERWORLD EVOLUTION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SAW II

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New 'S
is Pin

By Nini Valera

HIS KNEES shaking so ba couldn't hold He fell to the floor name—Kris Lawrenc da—was called as th of "Search for the S Million," season 2, at Theater last Sunday.

Kris, from Los Angeles, won over two grand fina Villaruel of Iloilo and Ji quez of Cebu—in the c showdown of the reality si petition.

An early favorite, Kris, 2 the house down with "Tl Get To You," which he san Fernandez.

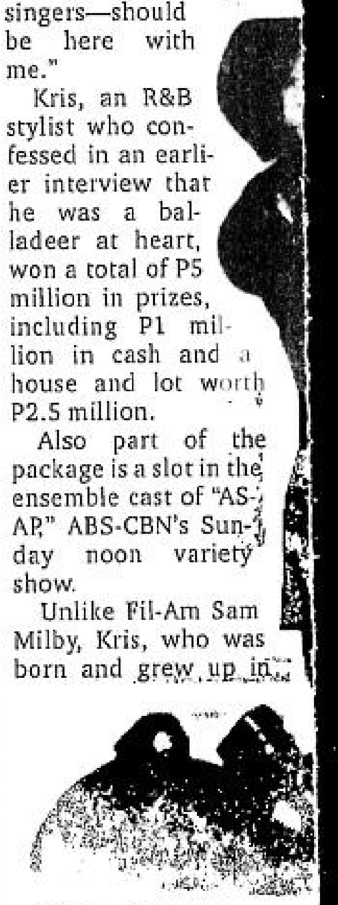
Backstage after the awa monies, a jubilant Kris c contain his excitement.

He told INQUIRER Enterta am so lucky to be here. Tata Villaroel and Jimm —they're both great singers—should be here with me."

Kris, an R&B stylist who confessed in an earlier interview that he was a balladeer at heart, won a total of P5 million in prizes, including P1 million in cash and a house and lot worth P2.5 million.

Also part of the package is a slot in the ensemble cast of "ASAP," ABS-CBN's Sunday noon variety show.

Unlike Fil-Am Sam Milby, Kris, who was born and grew up in


KRIS on his knees

"STAR in a Million" 2005, wi Marquez

Fitting tr Edsa Re

From page A2-3

'Cheaper By the Dozen, 2'

STEVE Martin and Bonnie Hunt are back "Cheaper By the Doz 2," playing the pare of the rambuncti Baker kids—all 12 them.

This time around, Bakers are going toe toe against another in the ultimate fam battle. The new fam of super-athletes headed by Eugene Lev The film opens in tow on Jan. 25.

'Derailed'

FOR their part, Clive Owen and Jennifer Aniston co-star for the first time in the thriller, "Derailed."

In the film, O

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Star' champ
oy from LA

Unlike Fil-Am Sam Milby, Kris Lawrence Cadevida holds dual citizenship, and so he can work in RP as a singer with no need for a permit

WERE
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right now.
Marquez

the US, holds dual citizenship. Which means he doesn't need a permit to work here as a performer.

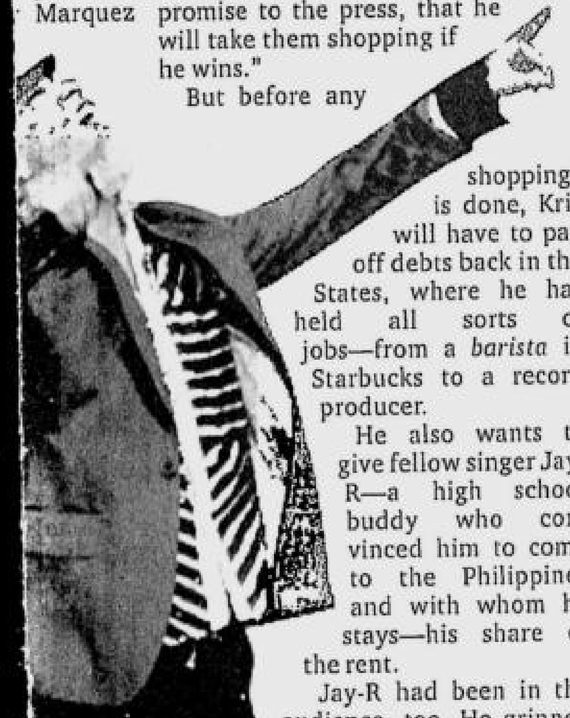
Kris' parents, Loreto and Tina Cadevida, had come home to Manila to give their son moral support. They both witnessed the final showdown.

Loreto, an accountant, earlier quit his job in the US to stay here longer with his son. This year's search started in June last year with 10 contestants. (The first "Star in a Million" was Erik Santos.)

"Actually, I spent a lot of money on this venture," Loreto said. "With what I've spent, I [could have] bought the house that Kris won, plus a car. I'd like to see my son's career established before I leave. It's easy for me to get another job in the US."

Tina, screamed the loudest during Sunday's proceedings, calling out her son's name as he sang Stevie Wonder's "Lately," his paean to the classic R&B of the Motown sound.

"I'm [Kris'] biggest fan," Tina told INQUIRER after the show. "I knew he would win. I'll make sure he keeps his promise to the press, that he will take them shopping if he wins."



But before any shopping is done, Kris will have to pay off debts back in the States, where he has held all sorts of jobs—from a *barista* in Starbucks to a record producer.

He also wants to give fellow singer Jay-R—a high school buddy who convinced him to come to the Philippines and with whom he stays—his share of the rent.

Jay-R had been in the audience, too. He grinned when told of Kris' intention to pay up and teased his friend, "Hey, man! Give me the whole million!"

Kris said he is looking forward to a real future here as a pop star. With his quirky hats and bandanas and that winning singing voice, he might just be, well, the next Jay-R.

th worthy opponents Tata Villaroel and Jimmy

ibute to
volution

plays a family man who meets a businesswoman (Aniston) on the commuter train to Chicago. Before they know it, flirtation quickly escalates into murder and blackmail.

Working-class hero

IN his new starrer, "Fun with Dick and Jane," Jim Carrey plays a loving husband with a promising career. But, just as he thinks he's on easy street, his company sells him out.

Confronted with the prospect of losing everything, Dick and his wife Jane (Téa Leoni) are forced to beg, borrow and steal to get it all back. In the process, they teach Big Business a lesson it won't easily forget

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SHANG CINEPLEX

① ZATHURA
MTRCB GP

② UNDERWORLD 2
MTRCB R-13

③ HALF LIGHT
Subject to MTRCB Rating

④ CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
MTRCB GP

PREMIERE THEATRE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
MTRCB GP

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KING OF MASKS (1999)
JANUARY 27 ONLY
The tale of an elderly street performer and a master of the Sichuan opera art, who longs for a male heir. When he discovers a cute boy for sale and takes him home to pass off as his own son, he's surprised to find out that his "heir" is in fact a girl

SOONG SISTERS (1997)
JANUARY 27 - FEBRUARY 2
The Soong family was a political dynasty in China that reached the highest levels of power. This film follows the lives of the US-educated Soong sisters and their journey back to China.

SCREENING SCHEDULE FOR FEB. 27

Soong Sisters	11:50am
King of Masks	2:45pm
Soong Sisters	4:55pm
King of Masks	7:50pm
Soong Sisters	10:00pm

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CINEMA 3 UNDERWORLD 2 R13
CINEMA 4 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2 GP
CINEMA 5 ZATHURA GP

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ZATHURA 1:10/3:20/5:30/7:40/9:50	DON'T GIVE UP ON US 2:00/4:30/7:00/9:30	UNDERWORLD 2 12:30/2:50/5:10/7:30/9:50	[illegible]
THE MAID	HALF LIGHT 11:50/2:20/4:50/7:20/9:50	NARNIA 1:10/4:00/6:50/9:40	HALF LIGHT 40/4:10/6:40/9:10
RUMOR HAS IT 2:10/2:30/4:50/7:10/9:30	LITTLE MANHATTAN 12:50/3:00/5:10/7:20/9:30	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2 12:40/2:55/5:10/7:25/9:4	ONLY P120 ADMISSION GLOBE PLATINUM P240/P299

ALIMALL CINEMAS

DON'T GIVE UP ON US 12:45/3:15/5:45/8:15	UNDERWORLD 2 1:40/4:00/6:20/8:40	ZATHURA 12:05/2:15/4:25/6:35/8:45
CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2 1:45/4:00/6:15/8:30	HALF LIGHT 12:45/3:15/5:45/8:15	DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

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movietime SCHEDULE AND EVENTS

The jumbo-sized Baker family is back in this sequel to the 2003 box-office hit

A mystery writer retreats to a remote village following the death of her son, only to be caught up in a supernatural mystery herself

During the Chinese seventh month the gates of hell opens. There are rules to follow but Rosa broke them. Now she is about to find out that ghosts do walk among the living!

A board game sends two boys into outer space. They have to finish the game to get back home

"THE BATTLE" MEMORABILIA
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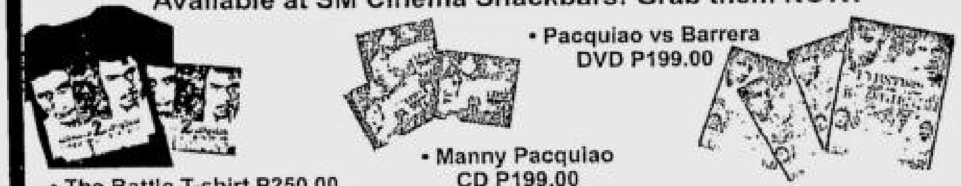

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2	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2 11:30FS/11:55MF/02:10/04:25/06:40 08:25LFS/09:00LMF/10:45END	2	UNDERWORLD EVOLUTION 11:20FS/11:30MF/01:30/03:30/05:30/07:30 09:15LFS/09:30LMF/011:15END
MEGAMALL			
1	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2 10:30FS/10:45MF/01:00/03:15/05:30/07:45 09:30LFS/10:00LMF/11:45END	3	ZATHURA 11:20FS/11:30MF/01:30/03:30/05:30/07:30 09:10LFS/09:30LMF/11:10END

METRO MANILA

SM MEGAMALL
1 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
2 THE MAID
3 ZATHURA
4 KING KONG
5 HAL FLIGHT
6 NARNIA
7 WHO'S YOUR DADDY
8 RUMOR HAS IT
9 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
10 UNDERWORLD 2
11 BIG TIME
12 LITTLE MANHATTAN

SM CITY STA. MESA
1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 HALF LIGHT
3 NARNIA
4 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
5 ZATHURA
6 RUMOR HAS IT
7 THE MAID
8 BIG TIME
9 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
10 KING KONG

SM CITY BICUTAN
1 ZATHURA
2 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 UNDERWORLD 2

SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA
1 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
2 UNDERWORLD 2
3 ZATHURA
4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
1 BLUE MOON
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
3 KING KONG
4 NARNIA
5 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
6 BIG TIME
7 UNDERWORLD 2
8 ZATHURA
9 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
10 THE MAID
11 RUMOR HAS IT
12 WHO'S YOUR DADDY

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 RUMOR HAS IT
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 NARNIA
5 LITTLE MANHATTAN
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
7 WHO'S YOUR DADDY
8 KING KONG
9 KUTOB
10 RESERVED

SM SUPERCENTER SUCAT
1 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
2 UNDERWORLD 2
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 ZATHURA

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
1 ZATHURA
2 UNDERWORLD 2
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 BIG TIME
5 THE MAID
6 HALF LIGHT
7 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
8 NARNIA

SM CITY MANILA
1 ZATHURA
2 HALF LIGHT
3 WHO'S YOUR DADDY
4 UNDERWORLD 2
5 NARNIA
6 BIG TIME
7 THE MAID
8 LITTLE MANHATTAN
9 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
10 BLUE MOON
11 RUMOR HAS IT
12 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2

SM CITY SAN LAZARO
1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 ZATHURA
3 HALF LIGHT
4 THE MAID
5 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
6 DON'T GIVE UP ON US

LUZON

SM CITY PAMPANGA
1 ZATHURA
2 NARNIA
3 BIG TIME
4 ST. ANGE
5 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
6 DON'T GIVE UP ON US

SM CITY BAGUIO
1 ZATHURA
2 FAMILY STONE
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 NARNIA

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO
1 NARNIA
2 ZATHURA
3 WHO'S YOUR DADY
4 RUMOR HAS IT

SM CITY BACOOR
1 WHO'S YOUR DADDY
2 THE MAID
3 ZATHURA
4 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
5 UNDERWORLD 2
6 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
7 KING KONG
8 NARNIA

SM CITY MARILAO
1 NARNIA
2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 IN HER SHOES
4 ZATHURA

SM CITY DASMARINAS
1 NARNIA
2 WHO'S YOUR DADDY
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 ZATHURA

SM CITY LUCENA
1 NARNIA
2 THE FOG
3 FAMILY STONE
4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US

SM CITY BATANGAS
1 ZATHURA
2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 ZATHURA
4 THE FOG

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU
1 NARNIA
2 UNDERWORLD 2
3 ZATHURA
4 FAMILY STONE
5 BIG TIME
6 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
7 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
8 THE MAN

SM CITY ILOILO
1 BEAUTIFUL BOXER
2 RESERVED
3 NARNIA
4 ZATHURA
5 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
6 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
7 RESERVED
8 FAMILY STONE

SM CITY DAVAO
1 ZATHURA
2 BEAUTIFUL BOXER
3 FAMILY STONE
4 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
5 BIG TIME
6 NARNIA

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
1 NARNIA
2 IN HER SHOES
3 AN UNFINISHED LIFE
4 ZATHURA

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6 UNDERWORLD 2
7 THE MAID
8 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
9 RUMOR HAS IT
10 JARHEAD
LITTLE MANHATTAN

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1 ZATHURA
2 RUMOR HAS IT
DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 The Chronicles of NARNIA
4 HALF LIGHT
5 UNDERWORLD 2
6 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
7 THE MAID
JARHEAD

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1 ZATHURA
2 The Chronicles of NARNIA
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 UNDERWORLD 2
5 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
6 THE MAID
7 LITLLE MANHATTAN
8 JARHEAD

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1 ZATHURA
2 The Chronicles of NARNIA
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 UNDERWORLD 2
5 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
6 ZATHURA
7 THE MAID

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1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 JARHEAD
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER

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1 ZATHURA
2 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
3 UNDERWORLD 2
4 THE MAID

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Cinema 3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
Cinema 4 UNDERWORLD 2
Cinema 5 CHEAPER BY THR DOZEN 2
Cinema 6 ZATHURA
Cinema 7 THE MAID

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2 RUMOR HAS IT
3 LITTLE MANHATTAN
4 JARHEAD
5 DON'T GIVE UP ON US

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1 ZATHURA
2 THE FAMILY STONE
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 SAINT ANGE
5 JARHEAD

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1 ZATHURA
2 THE FAMILY STONE
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 The Chronicles of NARNIA
5 BEAUTIFUL BOXER

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2 THE FAMILY STONE
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6 ZATHURA

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January 23, 2006

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Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification call 729 7777

G1	GLORIETTA 1	1 HALF LIGHT	2 THE MAID	3 UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION	4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
G4	GLORIETTA 4	1 ZATHURA	2 HALF LIGHT	3 THX UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION GUARANTEED SEATS	
		4 RUMOR HAS IT	5 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	6 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2	7 THE MAID
GB1	GREENBELT 1	1 ZATHURA	2 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2		
GB3	GREENBELT 3	1 THX ZATHURA GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2 GUARANTEED SEATS		
		3 RUMOR HAS IT GUARANTEED SEATS	4 HALF LIGHT GUARANTEED SEATS	5 UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2	2 UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION		
		3 ZATHURA	4 HALF LIGHT	5 RUMOR HAS IT	
ACC	AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 ZATHURA	2 UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION	3 THE FAMILY STONE	4 JARHEAD

A JUMANJI SPACE ADVENTURE
ZATHURA
A SPACE ADVENTURE

OPENS TODAY
AT AYALA CINEMAS

MTRCB Rating: General Audience (G)
For screening schedule, pls. call 729-7777

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① Cheaper by the Dozen 2
② Zathura
③ Half Light
④ Underworld: Evolution
⑤ The Maid

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STAR RECORDS GENESIS

Nothing new about these, but they're very entertaining

1 Lessons from a deadly game

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

REVIEW

LIKE "JUMANJI"—THE HIT kiddie film about a magical board game that brings its elements to life—"Zathura: A Space Adventure" is also about kids trapped in a very dangerous, life-altering game. Another brainchild of children's book author Chris Van Allsburg, the tale re-explores familiar territory, and while we get nothing new or grand in terms of story ideas or storytelling, it's still a fun, wholesome adventure. This is a movie that adults can also enjoy, as it sneakily addresses real issues that kids can understand, such as sibling rivalry and the strengths and limitations of parents.

Once one gets past the notion that "Zathura," with its playtime-turns-disastrous premise, might be just a tired clone of "Jumanji," it gets quite interesting. The idea that such seemingly innocent games should threaten the lives of bored, whiny and already-troubled children is indeed attractive and full of potential. As with "Jumanji," kids who play the Zathura board game learn important life lessons while being thrust into physically imperiling challenges that luck brings them.

The hi-jinks commence after a divorced dad (Tim Robbins) leaves his two bickering sons Walter (Josh Hutcherson) and Danny (Jonah Bobo) at home for a work-related errand. Stuck indoors with their indifferent teen sister Lisa (Kristen Stewart), the boys discover an old game capable of supernaturally warping their reality in ways they never imagined. And because it's a space-themed adventure, they discover their house afloat yet intact in outer space, but obviously not for long, with dangers from meteor showers to plundering reptilian aliens becoming horrifyingly real.

With the exception of the somewhat goofy-looking aliens, the threats are made realistic with an array of special effects, most notably in sequences where the house gets bombarded by tiny meteors, and when it gets barraged by attacking spaceships. But more important, Hutcherson and Bobo perform well, even in the quiet scenes. They're sympathetic and not annoying, so adult viewers who aren't into fantasy films geared for young viewers can stay put 'til the end.

Despite some slowly paced bits, "Zathura" is a good joint effort led by actor-director Jon Favreau, who emphasizes screenwriter David Koepp and John Kamps' child-friendly but character-driven script.

"ZATHURA: A Space Adventure"

2 Bittersweet memories

By Francis Rex Alger
Contributor

HOW MANY can recall their first attempt, as kids, to understand the complexities of life and love? I'm not one of them.

In the late 1980s, tales of such bittersweet memories were presented in the weekly ABC TV series, "The Wonder Years." Fans of the coming-of-age show will remember Kevin Arnold (played by Fred Savage) who recounts what it's like growing up in suburban America during the '60s.

"LITTLE Manhattan"

One of the show's writers was Mark Levin. Now for his film directorial debut, he updates "The Wonder Years"—the result is "Little Manhattan."

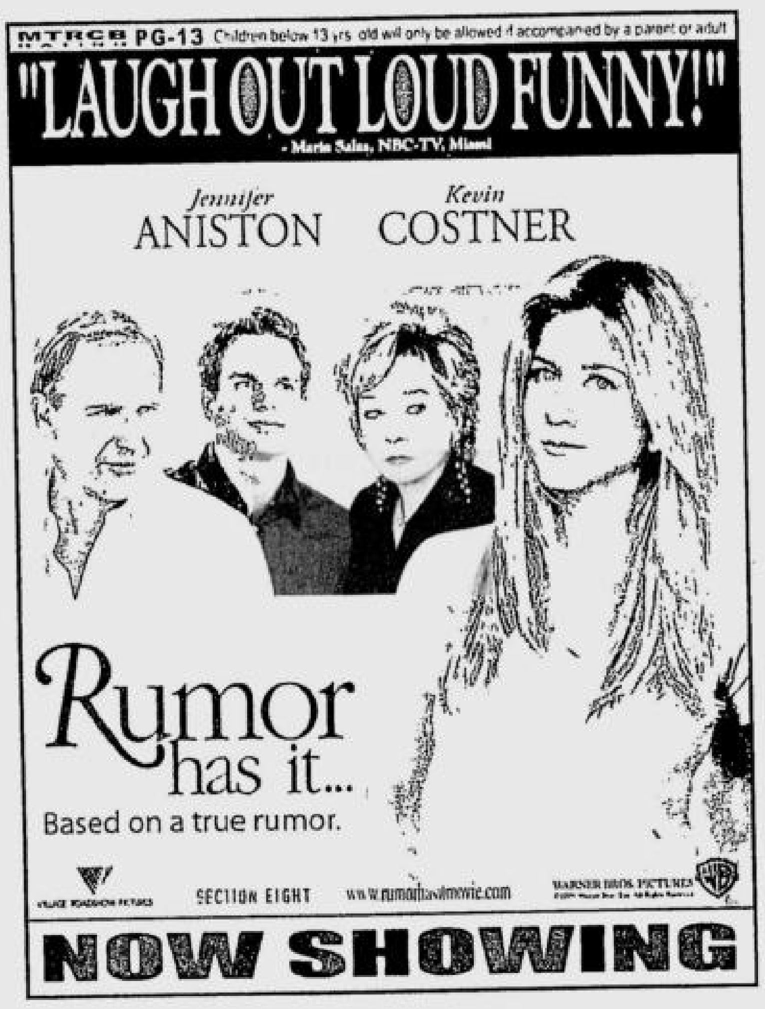
In this modern spin, Gabe is a fifth-grader living in the Upper West Side. He can't fully comprehend the fact that his estranged parents live in the same apartment. Yet his life, which revolves around his buddies, basketball and scooting around the 10 square blocks around his building, is bliss—until Rosemary Telesco comes into his life.

Gabe has known Rosemary since nursery school, but when they become sparring partners in karate class, the 10-year-old lad develops feelings for her that both thrill and torment him. He falls into an agonizing dilemma after learning that she's leaving for summer camp. Will she be his girl?

What makes "Little Manhattan" endearing are the characters that the viewers can relate to, and moments such as those known to make life meaningful. Levin also injects a touch of magic realism, a maneuver that made "Ally McBeal" a little more entertaining (though the effect here isn't meant to be hilarious).

Everything in "Manhattan" we've seen countless times, but Jennifer Flackett's screenplay brims with sincerity, which is irresistible. Further, Levin picked his actors well (it's great to see "Sex and the City" stars Cynthia Nixon and Willie Garson again). But much of the credit goes to the songs—the selection is excellent for walking down memory lane (for instance, The Beatles' "In My Life").

"Little Manhattan" is not among the most memorable films of 2005. Nor is it one that many might remember 10 years from now. But it certainly makes entertaining viewing.


MTRCB PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

"LAUGH OUT LOUD FUNNY!"
- Mario Salas, NBC-TV, Miami

Jennifer ANISTON Kevin COSTNER

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NOW SHOWING

The first boxoffice winner of 2006

UNDERWORLD tops the U.S. and int'l boxoffice charts

Beckinsale as Selene in Sony's #1 boxoffice hit "Underworld: Evolution"

THIS WEEKEND — U.S. Moviegoers were in the mood for vampires and werewolves as the special effects driven horror sequel **'Underworld: Evolution'** made a spectacular bow at #1 and easily leading the North American box office to a solid winter frame. Other new releases did not put much of a dent into the marketplace.

The first blockbuster movie of 2006 , the film generated the second largest debut ever for a January opener in motion picture history which soared to an estimated $27.6m .

The film stars Kate Beckinsale *(and her tight leather pants)* and averaged a meaty $8,606 from 3,207 theaters. The Sony sequel flew higher than the $21.8m bow and $7,463 average of the first Underworld which debuted in September 2003.

All new films premiering at this time of year do not reach the heights of **'Underworld: Evolution'**.

The only film opening or expanding nationally in January to debut stronger was Star Wars: Special Edition.

INTERNATIONAL BOXOFFICE

The film also opened at #1 in Metro Manila with an estimated P25M weekend gross. It was the second biggest opening after the company's LOTR– Return Of The King.

Registering the biggest per theater average was SM Megamall with an estimated P1.8m, second place went to SM-North P1.7m, Third place Robinson-Ermita P1.24m, Fourth place Glorietta IV P1.2m and Fifth place SM-Manila P1.14m. •

ADVT

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

Wednesday, January 25, 2006

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Channel	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5			Winner TV Shopping		PBA				Sentro	PBA					Big News	American Idol 5		Billboard On-Air	
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Little Amy	Mr Bean	Naruto	Amazing Twins	Meteor Garden Season 2	TV Patrol World	Gulong Ng Palad	Mga Anghel Na Walang Langit	Only You	Vietnam Rose	Forbidden Love	S.O.C.O.			Insider
AXN		World's Most Extreme Races		Las Vegas		Ripley's Believe It or Not		Lost		24		Mondo Magic	Samsung Sports World	Guinness World Records	Guinness World Records	CSI: Miami (S-2)		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (S-5)	
Cartoon Network	Johnny Bravo	Dexter's Laboratory	Powerpuff Girls	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Codename: Kids Next Door		Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy		Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers	Battle B-Daman	Energy Bomb	X-Men Evolution	Samurai Jack	Justice League	Static Shock	Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers
Cinema One		Kakabakaba Ka Ba?				Eskapo				Lutang			Persona	Tinik Sa Dibdib		April, May, June			
Cinemax	Real Genius				The Professionals				National Security			Boys & Girl From County Clare			Body Snatchers (9:35 PM)			And Justice For All	
CNN				Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International		World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
Discovery Channel		Zero Hour		American Chopper		Quest For The Lost Pharoah		Wild Weather		Wild Discovery		Crossings: Tony Tan		Engineering Against Disaster		A Haunting		Wild Weather	
Disney Channel	Mr Bean The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/ Unbikative Bunny	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Sabrina, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr Bean The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			American Dragon		Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Rangers	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN						Billiards 2006 Men's World Summit of Pool		Boxing Series Friday Night Fights				Sportscenter Asia	World Tenpin Masters '05		Pool Snooker Mosconi Cup 2005		Billiards '05 BCA Open 9-Ball Champs		Sportscenter Asia
ETC				Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		Veronica Mars		ETC Special		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
EWTN	Marriage Works In Christ	Angelus (3:15 PM)	Faith In Motion	Adventures In Odyssey	EWTN Original Productions	Rosary With Mother Angelica	Defending Life	EWTN Gallery	In The Heart Of The Church	Mother Angelica Live Classics		One In Their Hearts	Catholic Social Teaching	Daily Mass (SAP) Live		Angelus (10:15PM)	Carpenter's Shop	Our Father's Plan	
Fox News		Hannity & Colmes		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako	Now and Forever	Date With Tiffany		Dragonball Z	Slam Dunk	Frog Prince	24 Oras		Extra Challenge	Sugo	Ethena	Starstruck 3	Jewel In The Palace		Nuts Entertainment			Saksi
Hallmark Channel	Bewitched IV	Family Law III		To The End Of The Earth			Who's The Boss? II	Bewitched IV	The Nanny	Strong Medicine		Judging Amy		Fast Food High			Sue Thomas F.B. Eye I		Strong Medicine
HBO				The Monster Squad			Pentagon Papers				To Gillian on her 37th Bday			Bad Boys				The Making Of Rome	Looney Tunes: Back In Action
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home shopping network	IBC Express Balita	EZ Shop		Home shop network		Global Family Series		Japan Video Topics		Up Close And Personal	IBC News Tonite	Home shopping network	
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Late Show w/ David Letterman		Heist		Velocity		X-Men Evolution	Street Smarts	Mad TV		That 70s Show	Arrested Development	Late Show w/ David Letterman		Late Show w/ David Letterman	Premium Blend	Primetime Glick	Chappelle Show
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Moto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Wolfgang Puck's	E! Entertainment Special		Style Star	Life & Style		Intimate Portrait		Breathing Room	Genuine Article
MTV Philippines	Jams	Whatever Things	MTV Hits	Hanging Out	The 70's House	Pop Inc		MTV Hits			Aeon Flux	Homecoming	Get Spotted	TRL		Viva La Bam	Laguna Beach	Get Hitch'd	VH1 Video Collections
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	OPM MYX	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	MYXILOG	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top 10		MYX Live!		Urban MYX	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX
National Geographic		Taiwan To The World		Faces And Places		5 Weddings And A Couple Of Funerals	Running For Freedom	Top 5		Wow!		About Asia		Microkillers Week		Taiwan To The World	Rough Trades	Faces And Places	
NBN		Value Vision		Value Vision		Teledyaryo	Diyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Sila?	Talk Ko 'To		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)		Teledyaryo				Krusada Kontra Krimen		Bantay OCW With Susan K	
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues	Rugrats	Hey Arnold!	My Life As A Teenage Robot	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	Chinese New Year Animal Stunt	Chinese New Year Animal Stunt	SpongeBob Story 101 All Grown Up/Nevus Chaos					All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Rocket Power	Chalkzone	The Wild Thornberrys	The Angry Beavers	The Brothers Garcia
PBO			Paano Ang Kahapon Kung Wala Na Ang Ngayon				Daddy Na Si Chito				Bayadra Brothers				Bilib Ako Sa 'Yo				Walang Matigas Na Pulis Sa Matinik Na Misis
Qtv		Bodyguard	Sister Hungry Heart	The Prince Of Tennis	MMK My Music Story		Moms		Love At Aogan Sa	Hotelier	All In	Laugh To Laugh Ang Kulit	Pusong Wagi		News On Q	Balikbayan		MMF (Music Marathon)	
RPN 9	TV Shopping		Defenders Of The Earth	Hey Arnold!	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	As Told By Ginger	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	Iron Chef		Trading Spouses		Extreme Make Over		Newswatch Now	Keep Up The Good Work		
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping				Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Kaluwalhatian		SBN Music Video			
Solar Sports		Dunhill Cup Mixed Doubles Finals		Copenhagen Masters 2005		Swatch FIVB World Tour '05 Durban Men's Finals				Sagupaan	NBA Jam	Sportsdesk	NBA Jam	Super Fights Profiling Arturo Gatti	NBA Memphis @ Miami				
Sports Plus				Raceworld		World Game		Superbowl Stories 3		NBA Detroit @ Minnesota							Body Of The Beast		
Star Movies				Dot The I			Death Wish V			The Village				Marked For Death					
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		American Idol 2006	Whose Line Is It Anyway?	Angel		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Friends	American Idol 2006		Medical Investigations		The Practice		Friends	American Idol 2006
Studio 23								Batman Beyond	Sports	Wazzup Wazzup	The Amazing Race		CSI (8:20 PM)	Life As We Know It		News Central	Oprah		Just Shoot Me

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

That same night, Richard and his twin brother, Raymond, held a very exclusive bash. Guests were given keys to the private party place

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DENNIS TRILLO ON JAN 28 STARMALL EDSA / SAM MILBY ON JAN 29 METROPOLIS ALABANG.

A MAGICIAN entertained the kids, but the biggest magic for them was Aguiluz/Amante's visit.

Birthday boy . . .

From page A2-1

their invited guests. Only those with keys were allowed entry.

Last year at the twins' birthday bash, Richard and Brian Revilla figured in a scuffle outside a bar at The Fort. A radio disc jockey and a fashion consultant accused the two actors of punching them.

"MULAWIN" co-star Nicole Anderson brings in Richard's cake

OPENING TODAY

From page A2-1

started by the "Ring" series. Da Rossi plays Rosa Dimaano, who must cope with restless spirits after breaking the rules of the Chinese Seventh Month or the Hungry Ghost Festival, a time "when the gates of hell open and specters are unleashed on an unsuspecting world." Lokman BS of moviexclusive.com finds Da Rossi "perfect in her innocent role ... there is decent acting by everyone ... [and the movie] delivers some good scares." There's talk of a Hollywood remake. Rito P. Asilo of the INQUIRER, however, complains that it "vacillates between unrestrained gloom and derivative gimmickry."

Cheaper by the Dozen 2

Stars Steve Martin, Bonnie Hunt, Eugene Levy, Hilary Duff

Directed by Adam Shankman

What is supposed to be a holiday at Lake Winnetka is turned into a game of one-upmanship between longtime rivals (Martin and Levy). True to their selfish nature, the men bring their extended clan (and the audience) along in their slapstick-silly grudge match. Robert K. Elder of the Chicago Tribune scoffs that this sequel is "Academy Award material" compared to the original, but goes on to disparage it as "a harmless, inoffensive bit of family programming ... that challenges our ability to stay awake." Daniel Eagan of the Film Journal International thinks that its "dated, sitcom approach reveals just how little the filmmakers think of their audience."

Zathura

Stars Tim Robbins, Josh Hutcherson, Dax Shepard, Jonah Bobo

Directed by Jon Favreau

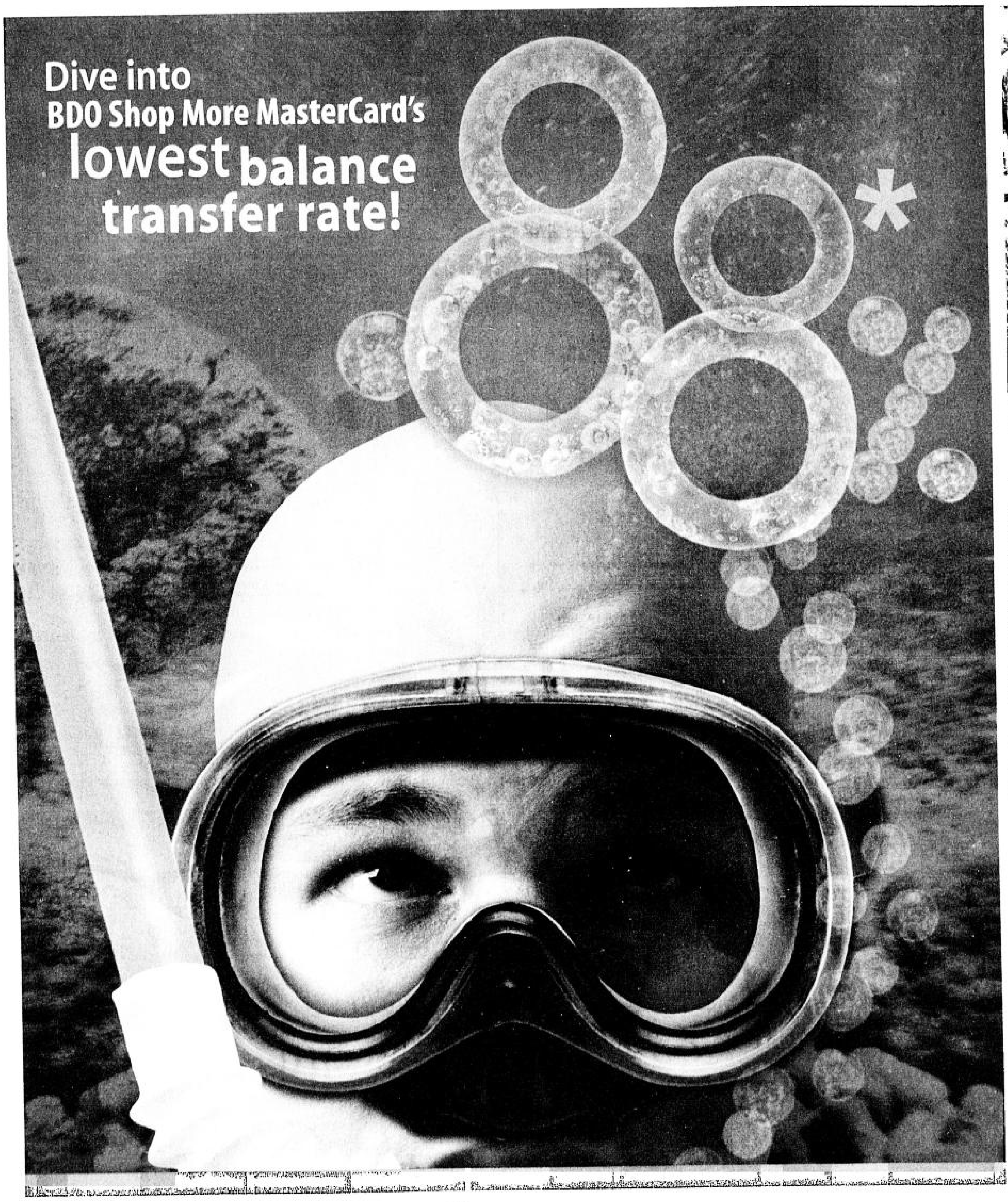
Think "Jumanji" in space. From the same author (Chris Van Allsburg) behind the kiddie classics "Jumanji" and "The Polar Express," "Zathura" features bickering siblings (Bobo and Hutcherson) who, after tampering with an old board game, embark on the ultimate space odyssey, complete with meteor showers and lizard-like aliens. Melinda Evans of The Atlanta Journal-Constitution predicts that "kids will love it, while parents might get a bit lost in space ... oddly, it stalls when the intergalactic adventures begin." Wesley Morris of the Boston Globe declares: "Rarely is a movie audience asked to put up with so much noise for such a thankless payoff ... [it's] a loud, endless family picture."

Half Light

Stars Demi Moore, Hans Matheson, James Cosmo

Directed by Craig Rosenberg

Mourning the tragic drowning of her son and her bitter separation, a best-selling mystery novelist (Moore) moves to a far-flung coastal town in the Scottish Highlands, where she gets entangled in a string of strange and inexplicable murders. Loneliness and paranoia soon take their toll on her. Is she losing her sanity or is she the next victim of a scheming killer? The film is described on Comingsoon.net as a "Hitchcockian thriller with a supernatural twist." A Yahoo.com member expresses disappointment, though: "Weak story, poor cast and no emotion." Another Netizen counters: "The movie starts slow, but picks up fast and will keep you on the edge of your seat. More turns than a race track."



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PC BUYER'S GUIDE
The No.1 Computer Magazine in the Philippines
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Yield of long-term treasury bonds tumble

Favorable budget figures to keep interest rates low

CRUZ

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COST OF THE GOVERNMENT'S 25-YEAR borrowings dropped by more than 1 percentage point yesterday following the market's substantial requirement for long-term investments.

The rate for the 25-year treasury bonds breached the 12-percent mark and fell by 125 basis points (1.25 percentage points) to only 11.25 percent. The rate for the 25-year bonds stood at 12.5 percent during its previous auction in July 2005.

The decline in yield of the 25-year paper came with the huge volume of bids, which reached P4.43 billion compared with the government's debt offering of only P4 billion.

The favorable response to the national government's long-term debt offering followed the announcement of the 2005 fiscal data, which showed that the budget deficit stood at only P146.5 billion, much lower than the official ceiling of P180 billion for last year.

The Bureau of the Treasury's auction committee, however, accepted only P3.1 billion worth of bids, therefore raising less than the government's programmed debt offering of P4 billion through yesterday's auction.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said the partial rejection of the bids was done because the Treasury's auction committee did not want the rate to settle at more than 11.25 percent. Had the Treasury accepted P4 billion worth of bids, then the rate for the 25-year bonds could have settled at 11.75 percent.

An 11.75-percent rate would have still reflected a decline from the 12.5 percent recorded last

YIELD/B4

'Sin' tax fails to boost revenue

THE SIN TAX LAW FAILED TO DELIVER BY A significant margin the government's expected additional revenues from the imposition of higher taxes on cigarettes and alcoholic products.

Documents from the Department of Finance showed that the Bureau of Internal Revenue collected only P2.09 billion in net additional revenues from the implementation of RA 9334, or the Sin Tax Law, which was implemented in January last year.

The DOF had expected P15 billion in additional revenues from the fiscal reform measure, of which P7.5 billion should come from the BIR and the rest from the Bureau of Customs.

DOF documents explained that the BIR's failure to collect the P7.5 billion in incremental revenues from the Sin Tax law was due to the decline in the volume of cigarettes and alcoholic beverages covered by the tax.

Prior to the imposition of the higher excise tax rates on so-called "sin" products in January last year, some cigarette and alcohol firms advanced production to avoid paying taxes based on the new and higher rates.

The excise tax is imposed on a product upon removal from a warehouse, and not upon sale.

Also, an Olongapo court issued an injunction in June last year prohibiting the government from collecting excise tax on imported cigarettes and alcoholic beverages passing through the Subic port and sold in duty-free shops.

Data showed that the BIR lost about P6 billion in potential additional tax collection from the Sin Tax law due to the decrease in the volume of cigarettes and alcoholic beverages that were covered by the excise tax.

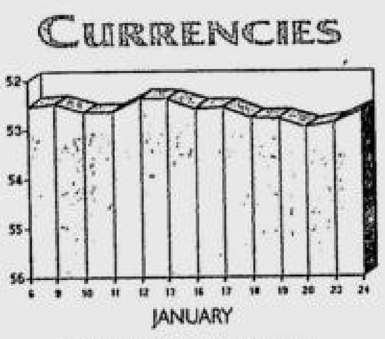
Without the decline in volume, the BIR would have collected P8 billion in incremental revenues from the Sin Tax law, more than the target of P7.5 billion.

The Sin Tax law was the first of the Arroyo administration's fiscal reform measures passed by Congress. The law was pushed to complement government efforts of reducing its gaping budget deficit.

Other fiscal reform measures already passed by Congress were the Lateral Attrition Law and the VAT Reform Law. *Michelle V. Remo*

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 52.64 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Jan. 24, 2006

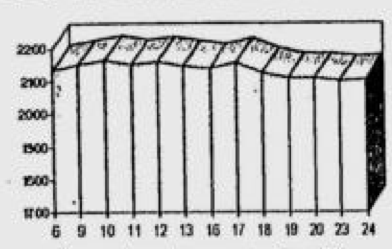
¥ 114.50 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Jan. 24, 2006

GOLD: $557.60-558.10

per ounce Hong Kong, Jan. 24, 2006

STOCK MARKET



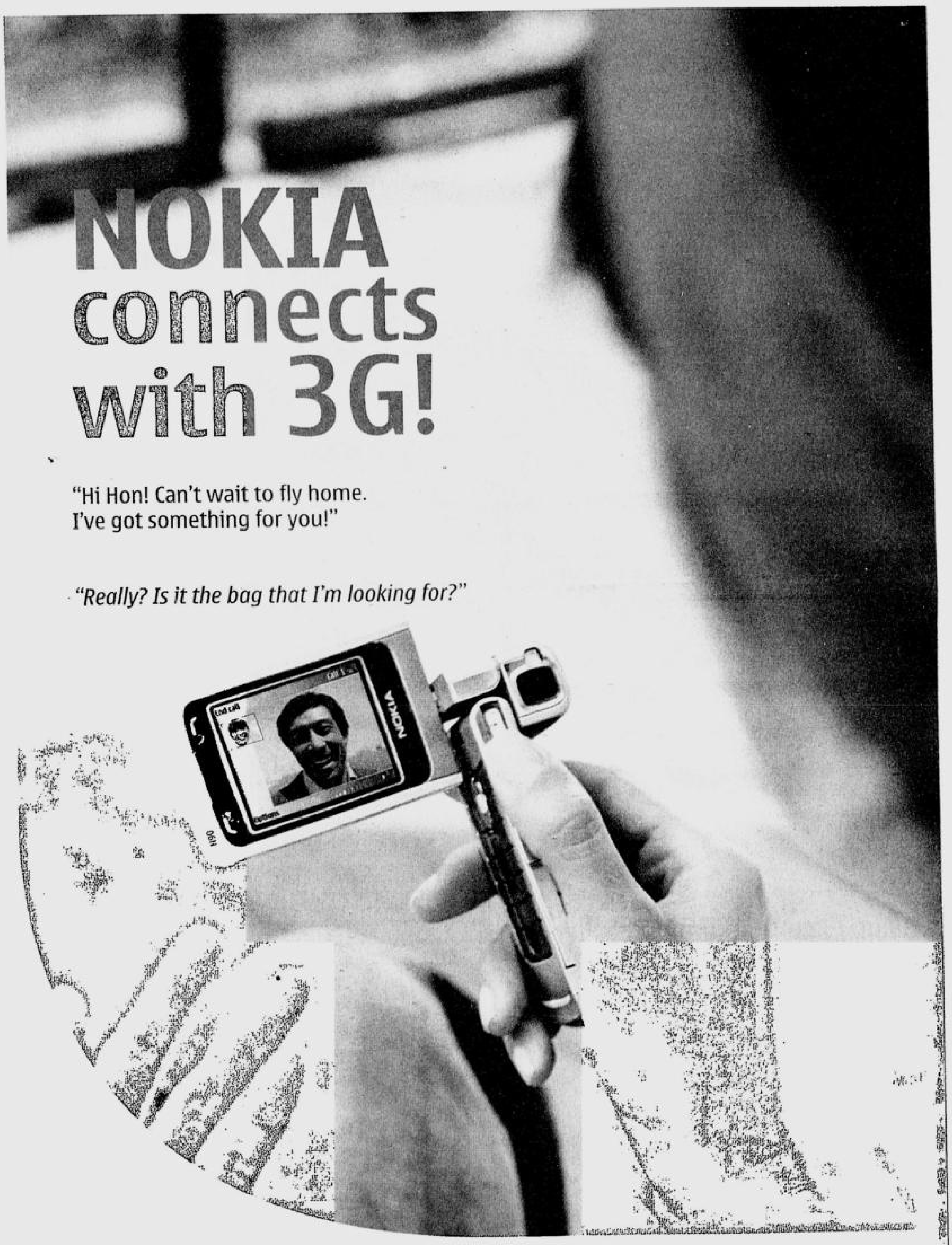
(See stock market report on Page B2)

Stocks up slightly

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.18 percent higher yesterday, supported by figures showing a lower budget deficit last year and an easing in oil prices, dealers said.

However, continuing rumors of new plots to overthrow President Macapagal-Arroyo kept some investors worried, they said.

STOCKS/B2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* By Strategy Analytics' Advanced Wireless Laboratory (AWL) panels in London, UK and Milan, Italy. May 2005.
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COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

BUSINESS MUST BE REALLY COMPETITIVE these days.

Yuchengco heiress Helen Y. Dee normally shuns the cocktail circuit, but Monday night, despite being a mere board director in the family's insurance flagship, Malayan, the eldest child of taipan Alfonso Yuchengco was working the rounds during Monday's cocktails of Swiss Re at the Tower Club.

Even her younger sister, Yvonne, who would rather be at Greenbelt's Nanbantei rather than stand on her heels chatting with the suits, heeded the call of Monday's duty, being the Malayan president.

For a still unclear reason, the chair of Malayan herself, former Insurance Commissioner Adelita Vergel de Dios, who normally attends such events for Malayan, was absent Monday, one of the industry's must-show events.

But then again, so was new Insurance Commissioner Evangeline Crisostomo-Escobillo.

Escobillo had hardly warmed her seat when she was hit by an anonymous complaint at the Ombudsman, for allegedly favoring the proposal of the group led by Herminia Jacinto, chair of the Philippine Insurers and Reinsurers Association, and Ramon Dimacali, president of Federal Phoenix, over the direction of compulsory third-party liability reforms.

Although anonymous, the complaint against Escobillo was believed to have been engineered by CTPL competitor Paulino Soo, chair of AIT Technology, and by recently replaced Insurance Commissioner Benjamin Santos.

Last week, the Ombudsman scheduled an interview, not only with Escobillo, but with Soo and Santos, "being the probable party of interest."

Mitsubishi gallantry

MITSUBISHI will today unveil a new Galant, hoping that the BMWish rear-end would lure back customers who have so far been kept away since the Japanese car company switched to the current "happy face" front-design for its vehicles.

The Galant 240M, as the Philippine-specific model is known ("240" because it is powered by a 2.4-liter engine, while "M" stands for the "Mivec" engine), is being launched as the class-leading Toyota Camry nears the the end of its current-model cycle.

Promising a bit longer rear-passenger legroom space than the Camry—the latter enjoys a tad more headroom for taller passengers—the new Galant is even being offered a couple of thousands less than the market leader, at P1.488 million, pre-EVAT.

Money-go-round

- FORMER Marcos financial adviser, the now Hong Kong-based Rolando Gapud, has been elected non-executive director of Del Monte Pacific following the takeover by the Butch Campos-San Miguel group of the Singapore-listed company.
- With the Gos gone, the chief corporate counsel of Equitable PCIBank, Nilo Divina, has also called it quits. A part-time UST professor, Divina will start next month a law firm, with Isabela Rep. Edwin Uy as name partner.

Heard through the grapevine

REDUCED to borrowing P2 million from the Cuyapo Rural Bank just to finance its operations, polo aficionado Antonio M. Garcia has taken the bitter pill and accepted a government offer, lower than his asking price of P300 million, to acquire the 187-hectare hacienda in Nueva Ecija that his father had painstakingly nurtured.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

First Pacific to raise stake in PLDT, eyes PTIC shares

By Clarissa S. Batino

FIRST PACIFIC CO. LTD., A Hong Kong-based conglomerate controlled by the Salim family of Indonesia, is increasing its stake in Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. to retain control of the country's largest telco with the entry of Japan's NTT DoCoMo by the end of the month, its top official said.

First Pacific at present is the biggest shareholder of PLDT, with about 24 percent interest in the country's most profitable firm.

In 2005, PLDT posted a net profit of more than P30 billion.

At the end of the month, Japan's NTT DoCoMo, a major player in the third-generation or 3G mobile services, will buy about half of the PLDT stake of its affiliate, NTT Communications Corp.

NTT Communications has 13.98 percent interest in PLDT.

First Pacific would have to acquire more PLDT shares to ensure control, according to officials.

First Pacific chief executive and managing director Manuel V. Pangilinan said in an interview that the company was interested in acquiring the 6.3 percent PLDT holdings worth about P21 billion owned by Philippine Telecommunications Investment Corp. through Prime Holdings Inc.

The Supreme Court on Friday ruled that the telco holdings of PTIC was ill-gotten and ownership should therefore revert to the government.

The high court's decision reversed a May 2002 Sandiganbayan ruling.

The Arroyo administration had not issued a statement on whether it intended to sell the PLDT shares of Philippine Telecommunications.

"As far as PLDT is concerned, the case involves the government and competing claims over the block of shares," PLDT spokesperson Ramon Isberto said. "As a company, PLDT is not involved in this matter."

Holding company PTIC owns about 14.4 percent of PLDT equivalent to 26.034 million shares. The First Pacific group, through Larouge B.V. (40 percent) and Metro Pacific Assets Holdings Inc. (14 percent), own 54 percent of PTIC.

Prime Holdings Inc., which is run by the family of Antonio "Tonyboy" Cojuangco, controls the remaining 46 percent of PTIC which, in turn, holds 11.975 million shares in PLDT.

Without the PTIC shares, First Pacific have to buy PLDT common shares from the market. According to a PLDT official, more PLDT shares have been coming out in the market as preferred shares mature and are converted into common shares.

The conversion of large blocks of PLDT preferred shares have increased the available shares in the market and recently diluted the holdings of the company's major shareholders including First Pacific and NTT Communications.

Last week, First Pacific said it bought 2.425 million shares of PLDT, representing about 1.3 percent of the total common shares issued for $74.1 million.

The Hong Kong conglomerate said the purchase was intended to minimize the dilutive impact of the conversion of outstanding PLDT convertible preferred shares and share options into new common shares on First Pacific's investment in PLDT.

PLDT said the holdings of First Pacific and two other big shareholders dwindled last month as a result of an increase in its outstanding common shares.

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Philam Plans soars amidst challenges

A recent industry report revealed that Philam Plans, Inc. once more topped industry sales with an overall market share of 23.55% as of September 2005. Ranking first, Philam Plans pre-need sales figure bested other players in the industry accumulating total new sales value of P3.76 billion from January to September 2005. Philam Plans likewise topped education plan sales with 35.9% market share or P1.7 billion.

The past year is regarded as one of the most trying and challenging years for the industry, yet Philam Plans continues to serve the needs of the market, despite an evident slowdown in industry sales.

Philam Plans attributes its ability to meet its commitments to foresight and prudence. Choosing to sell only fixed value plans since it started in 1989, Philam Plans has been spared from the financial issues other companies now face because of their having sold traditional open-ended-value plans. Today, only the fixed value pre-need plan is sustainable.

Philam Plans is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Philamlife, the country's leading life insurance company. Philamlife is also the Philippine-based affiliate of the American International Group (AIG), the leading US-based global insurance and financial services organization.

Philam Plans' continued leadership in the market can be attributed to its comprehensive pre-need product portfolio, its management expertise and sound financial practices. "Being a multinational company ourselves because our parent firm, Philamlife, is a wholly owned subsidiary of the American International Group (AIG), we have to conform even to international standards, oftentimes putting us in a position where we have to comply with stricter standards than the local regulator" commented Philam Plans President and CEO Jesus G. Hofileña. "While difficult, this is actually more advantageous to safeguarding the interests of our planholders as they are assured their funds are much safer with Philam Plans", he added. Mr. Hofileña appealed to the public to keep their faith and patronage in pre-need. "There is no substitute to what pre-need plans do best - providing a disciplined and assured way for Filipinos to save for unavoidable financial needs in the future. Allow our company to serve you", said Philam Plans' CEO.

Many companies prosper during good times, but best companies are proven during difficult times. This statement could not be more true for Philam Plans, which has continued with its consistent performance and untainted record of 16 years of promises kept.

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Stocks up slightly

From page B1

The composite index rose 3.86 points to 2,103.37 after trading between 2,095.78 and 2,105.49.

Volume reached 3.5 billion shares worth P786.1 million. Gainers marginally outnumbered decliners 40 to 39, while 53 stocks ended unchanged.

The all-shares index advanced 5.93 points to 986.92.

The market was cheered by the government's announcement of a P146.5-billion 2005 budget deficit, well below the official target ceiling of 180 billion pesos, thanks to higher revenues and lower expenditures.

"A lower government budget deficit means interest rates would likely be more stable, since there will be less pressure for the government to tap the debt market. This should help stimulate economic activity," said Jonathan Ravelas of Banco de Oro Universal Bank.

"There are some jitters in the market caused by the military's admission that there is a threat against the government, and this has prevented the index from staging a rebound," said Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities. *AFP*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of January 24, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	36.5	36.5	36	36.5	437,300
Bank of the Phil. Islands	55.5	57.5	55.5	57.5	1,488,300
China Banking Corp.	600	605	600	605	370
Citystate Savings Bank	19	19	19	19	500
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	61	62	60.5	62	160,900
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	29.5	30	29	30	1,582,000
Philippine National Bank	32.5	32.5	32.5	32.5	17,100
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	14	14	14	14	100
Security Bank Corp.	36.5	36.5	36	36	5,600
Union Bank of the Phil.	31	31.5	31	31.5	3,200
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
First Metro Invest. Corp.	25	25	25	25	3,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	3100	3100	3090	3100	310
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	82,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	145	145	145	145	750
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2100	2105	2100	2105	210
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	52.5	52.5	52	52.5	314,900
Manila Electric Co. A	14	14	14	14	11,500
Manila Electric Co. B	21	21.5	21	21.5	105,900
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.3	6.4	6.3	6.3	4,436,000
Petron Corp.	4.75	4.85	4.75	4.85	3,276,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.93	0.95	0.93	0.95	250,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.4	3.8	3.4	3.8	32,000
CADP Group Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	50,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23.25	23.25	23.25	23.25	6,200
Jollibee Foods Corp.	38.5	40.5	38.5	39.5	176,000
Pancake House Inc.	3.65	3.7	3.65	3.7	6,000
RFM Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	300,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1.5	1.52	1.5	1.52	197,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63	64	63	64	167,000
San Miguel Corp. B	87.5	88	87.5	88	119,500
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	5,000
Universal Robina Corp.	20.25	20.5	20.25	20.5	10,300
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	200,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.34	0.35	0.34	0.35	4,110,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.95	0.97	0.93	0.96	4,500,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.35	4.4	4.3	4.4	200,000
CHEMICALS					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.22	1.22	1.22	1.22	8,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	100,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.075	0.075	0.0725	0.0725	1,500,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	2,800,000
Stanlel Manufacturing	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	50,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc.	8.9	8.9	8.9	8.9	1,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.008	0.011	0.008	.011	,765,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.009	0.013	0.009	0.012	253,000,000
Atok-Big Wedge.Inc. B	13	13	13	13	100
Ayala Corp.	325	327.5	320	325	49,940
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.54	0.54	0.53	0.53	360,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	49,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.024	0.025	0.023	0.025	25,500,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.22	2.24	2.22	2.24	115,000
APC Group Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	100,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.007	0.0075	0.007	0.0075	255,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.9	0.91	0.89	0.91	300,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	30,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.08	1.08	7,375,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	76,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	4.5	4.7	4.5	4.65	3,059,000
Medco Holdings	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	200,000
Pacifica	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	5,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.25	0.26	0.245	0.25	6,190,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	1,430,000
SM Investments Corp.	237	240	237	239	639,620
South China Resources Inc.	0.55	0.59	0.55	0.59	210,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co.	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	400,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	10.25	10.5	10	10	2,717,700
Belle Corp.	1.02	1.04	1.02	1.04	2,407,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.195	0.195	0.185	0.185	2,310,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	300,000
C & P Homes Inc.	1.84	1.84	1.8	1.8	121,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	90,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.22	0.22	0.215	0.215	540,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.3	1,320,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.49	0.49	0.48	0.49	10,760,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	90,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.46	1.48	1.46	1.48	2,495,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	100,000
Interport Res.	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	6,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.004	0.005	0.004	0.005	17,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	10,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	1,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.36	1.38	1.36	1.38	2,939,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	11,000,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	600,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	200,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	5.8	6	5.8	6	16,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	380,000
SM Development Corp.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	46,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.5	7.7	7.5	7.6	5,339,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	260,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	17,300
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.93	0.94	0.93	0.93	1,340,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	740	745	740	740	34,810
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.4	1,354,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1750	1750	1730	1745	127,560
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	100,000
Imperial Res.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	3,000,000
Island Info And Tech Inc.	0.046	0.048	0.045	0.048	14,600,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0625	0.0625	0.0575	0.06	89,800,000
Philweb Corp.	0.027	0.028	0.026	.0281	,353,300,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.66	7,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	11.5	11.5	11.25	11.25	548,100
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	130,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36	1,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.62	1.64	1.62	1.64	1,338,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	280,000
EDUCATION					
Centro Escolar University	9	9	9	9	51,000
Ipeople Inc.	3	3	3	3	136,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Paxys Inc.	7.5	7.7	7.3	7.7	1,271,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	1.18	1.22	1.14	1.18	799,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.66	1.7	1.64	1.66	1,664,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0065	0.0075	0.0065	0.0075	212,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	6.2	6.4	6.1	6.2	715,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.22	0.23	0.22	0.225	2,270,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co.B	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.27	9,610,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	1,500,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.027	0.027	0.026	0.026	46,800,000
Omico Corp.	0.0055	0.0065	0.005	.0062	,251,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.4	1.4	1.38	1.38	1,740,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	2.16	2.18	2.12	2.14	2,706,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	25.5	25.5	25.5	25.5	12,300
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	300,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.19	0.21	0.19	0.21	690,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0065	0.008	0.0065	0.007	326,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0075	0.0085	0.0075	0.008	159,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	120,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	4.1	4.1	4	4.1	246,000
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series M	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series O	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	800
PLDT (10% Pref) Series P	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	8,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	12.25	12.25	12.25	12.25	11,700

DISCLOSURES

MANILA Jockey Club Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 28. Stockholders of record as of March 10 will be entitled to vote.

***

ROXAS Holdings Inc. purchased on Jan. 23, 46,000 shares at P1.50 per share, and 120,000 shares worth P1.52 each, pursuant to its share buy back program.

***

C & P Homes Inc. disclosed that because of the decrease in the corporation's authorized capital stock, every 10 shares held by each shareholder as of Dec. 6, 2005 would be consolidated into one share. All resulting fractional shares would be dropped. The corporation therefore requests shareholders to surrender stock certificates for replacement. These may be surrendered starting Feb. 15 to stock transfer agent Securities Transfer Services Inc., which is located at 4/F Benpres Bldg., Exchange Rd., Ortigas Center, Pasig City. The old certificates will be eligible for trading only up to Feb. 28. ***Compiled by Cyril L. Bonabente, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

January 24, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.812216	1.000000	52.8670
Japan	Yen	0.007101	0.008743	0.4622
United Kingdom	Pound	1.452404	1.788200	94.5368
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.104740	0.128956	6.8175
Switzerland	Franc	0.646463	0.795925	42.0782
Canada	Dollar	0.707013	0.870474	46.0193
Singapore	Dollar	0.501027	0.616865	32.6118
Australia	Dollar	0.610781	0.751993	39.7556
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.154533	2.652661	140.2382
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.216585	0.266660	14.0975
Brunei	Dollar	0.499487	0.614968	32.5115
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000086	0.000106	0.0056
Thailand	Baht	0.020746	0.025543	1.3504
UAE	Dirham	0.221144	0.272272	14.3942
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.231200	65.0899
Brazil	Real	0.359945	0.443164	23.4288
India	Rupee	0.018418	0.022676	1.1988
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.216764	0.266880	14.1091
Mexico	New Peso	0.077104	0.094931	5.0187
Korea	Won	0.000828	0.001019	0.0539
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025430	0.031309	1.6552

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TOYOTA MOTOR PHILIPPINES CORPORATION

PNB mulls over expansion of remittance unit

By Doris C. Dumlao

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL BANK PLANS TO EXpand its global remittance operations, particularly in North America, to cement its leadership in a business marked by stiff competition.

Once the country's biggest bank, PNB still has the largest global network, with 99 remittance centers worldwide. PNB controls about a quarter of total remittances sent in by overseas Filipino workers (OFW) through banking channels.

Of PNB's total offshore network, at least 87 are located in North American continent, supported by three full operating branches in New York, Los Angeles and Canada.

"The pie is growing," PNB president Omar Mier said. "Remittances are going up as more and more Filipinos are going overseas."

Mier said PNB had an advantage in the US remittance market over the new entrants because of its existing branches there.

"The US is quite strict now. With Amla (anti-money laundering) in place, it's getting tougher and tougher unless you have an existing branch, and that's one thing going in our favor," he said.

He said PNB would likewise scout for opportunities in Europe and the rest of Asia.

OFW inflows coursed through banks went up by 27 percent from January to November last year to $9.7 billion from a year ago.

There are about eight million OFWs deployed around the world.

Japan firms' confidence in RP slightly up

Business sentiment for Asean 5 also improved, with Thailand in the lead

SUITE LAUNCH
The opening last month of the 280-room Camp John Hay Suites in Camp John Hay, Baguio City, opened was seen as a much needed shot in the arm for the local tourism industry, boosting the image of the City of Pines as the convention capital north of Manila. Witnessing the opening are (from left): Babes Singson, former BCDA chairman,Bob Sobrepeña, head of the Camp John Hay Development Co., Jun Rojas, present BCDA chairman, and Oscar Lopez, head of the Lopez Group of Companies.

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE CONFIDENCE OF JAPANESE FIRMS IN the country may have recovered slightly, but it still ranges on the negative side at -1.4 rating in January from the -.53 rating of the previous month, according to a monthly survey by the Japan External Trade Organization.

Jetro data showed that Japanese companies and affiliates doing business in the country have given a negative diffusion index for the country in the past nine consecutive months.

The report said the Philippine rating for this month reflected the firms' overall sentiment for the five original members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which include Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore.

Overall current business sentiment for the five Asean countries included in the survey "improved somewhat" by 2.4 points, with Thailand leading the group with an improvement of 7 DI points, thanks to its booming auto and transport equipment sector.

The upturn in sentiment for the Asean 5 was due to the recovery in demand for transportation machinery and electronics, the survey showed.

Jetro said the Philippine outlook DIs for two to three months from January indicated that the sentiment on the country could turn around to a positive 1.4 rating.

The aim of the survey is to provide up-to-date information on business conditions in Asia to help companies develop more effective strategies.

Jetro polls the companies to measure year-on-year changes in their business outlooks for the current month and the next two or three months ahead. The answers are expressed as DI, which is derived from the difference between the ratio of positive and negative responses.

When Jetro started the monthly poll in June 2001, the Philippines rated negative in the first 10 months, with the DI rating bottoming out at -40.9 in December 2001. It peaked at 22.9 points in September 2004.

Philippine-based respondents in the August survey included 213 firms.

Gokongwei firms out to regain market darling status

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE COMPANIES OF TAIPAN JOHN Gokongwei Jr. are moving to shed their image as second-rate investment choices, with no less than heir apparent Lance Gokongwei announcing the group's new thrust in a road show presentation Monday.

The briefing, held at the Crowne Plaza ballroom in Pasig City, was aimed at prospective investors in Universal Robina Corp., and heralded the shift in the mindset of the conglomerate long known—and frowned upon—for keeping secret its corporate dealings.

The younger Gokongwei told reporters that the public offering of URC shares, composed of new and old shares to be sold by existing shareholders, is meant to improve the company's free float, and make it more attractive to investors.

While URC, its parent firm JG Summit Holdings Corp., and realty arm Robinson's Land Corp. have been performing well on the corporate side, fund managers and investors have generally shied away from these stocks due to their poor liquidity and the limited amount of shares traded publicly.

Because of this, the Gokongwei companies never really regained the "investor darling" status it held during the stock market bull run of the mid-1990s.

Gokongwei is hoping to change this by reforming the company's image.

PCI Capital Corp. head Erlaster Sotto revealed that the public offer will boost URC's free float—the amount of shares freely traded on the market at any given point—by a factor of ten.

All told, URC will have a free float of P14.4 billion after the offering, putting it at par with some of the biggest firms listed on the local stock exchange.

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CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CONDITION
(Head Office and Branches)
As of December 29, 2005

ASSETS	
Cash & Cash Items	P 779,815,254
Due from Bangko Sentral	2,966,138,755
Due from Other Banks	1,422,497,359
Interbank Loans Receivable	44,925,484,837
Trading Account Securities (Net)	72,745,792
Investments in Bonds & Other Debt Instruments (Net)	30,248,944,919
Loans, Discounts & Advances (Net)	11,396,132,354
Equity Investments (Net)	1,458,655,069
Bank Premises, Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment (Net)	3,521,926,121
Other Assets (Net)	11,478,358,654
Property Owned/Acquired	5,812,546,375
Others	5,665,812,279
TOTAL ASSETS	P 108,270,699,114
LIABILITIES	
Demand Deposits	P 13,686,951,129
Savings Deposits	27,036,618,611
Time Deposits	19,507,333,732
Special/Other Deposits	1,968,117
Due to Bangko Sentral	35,521,089
Due to Banks	125,144
Outstanding Checks/Payment Orders	1,901,199,498
Bills Payable:	13,608,932,313
BSP - Rediscounts/Special Programs	19,045,668
Interbank Borrowings	12,788,315,953
Others	801,570,692
Unearned Income & Other Deferred Credits	1,225,535,785
Other Liabilities	12,096,423,369
TOTAL LIABILITIES	P 89,100,608,787
CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	
Capital Stock	P 7,087,057,923
Surplus	12,016,360,283
Surplus Reserves	66,672,121
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P 19,170,090,327
TOTAL LIABILITIES & CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P 108,270,699,114
CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	
Unused Commercial Letters of Credit	P 336,001,177
Bills for Collection	43,127,998
Spot/Future Exchange Sold	11,058,198,867
Spot/Future Exchange Bought	1,693,000,175
Assets Held under Trust & Investment Management Agreements	5,163,016,511
Invested in:	
Government Securities	3,177,052,168
Other Securities, Debt Instruments And Shares of Stock	269,542,006
Loans & Discounts	1,708,626,595
Other Assets	7,795,742
Accountabilities:	
Trust & Other Fiduciary	4,144,127,389
Common Trust Funds	675,066,813
Investment/Fund Management	343,822,309
Other Contingent Accounts	1,005,763,994
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	P 19,299,108,722

Other Information

1. Deposits of:	
a) Government	P 11,171,443,614
b) Banks	424,242,816
c) Trust Department	545,540,174
2. Compliance with Magna Carta Law:	
a) Prescribed Ratio of Compliance for 6% (Small Enterprises)	6.87%
b) Prescribed Ratio of Compliance for 2% (Medium Enterprises)	3.81%
3. Amount of Non-Performing Loans	4,051,007,210
4. Ratio of Non-Performing Loans to Total Loan Portfolio	6.86%
5. Amount of Classified Loans and Other Risk Assets	5,743,529,703
6. General Provision for Loan Losses	393,845,706
7. Specific Provision for Loan Losses	2,339,482,893
8. Return on Equity (ROE)	14.69%
9. Amount of DOSRI Loans/Advances	592,822,148
10. Ratio of DOSRI Loans/Advances to Total Loan Portfolio	1.00%
11. Amount of Past Due DOSRI Loans/ Advances	
12. Ratio of Past Due DOSRI Loans/ Advances to Total Loan Portfolio	

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
MAKATI CITY) S.S.

We, Cesar G. Ilagan and Victor B. Valdepeñas of the above-mentioned bank do solemnly swear that all matters set forth in the above statement of condition are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief.

(Sgd) CESAR G. ILAGAN
Controller

(Sgd) VICTOR B. VALDEPEÑAS
President

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 17th day of January, 2006, affiants exhibiting to me their Community Tax No. 13757037 issued at Quezon City on January 07, 2005 and Community Tax No. 02167105 issued at Manila on January 20, 2005, respectively.

Doc. No. 220
Page No. 45
Book No. XXII
Series of 2006.

BERNARDO V. CABAL
NOTARY PUBLIC
UNTIL DEC. 31, 2007
PTR NO. 9439540C, 01.06.05, Makati
IBP O.R. No. 632068, 01.05.06, Makati
Roll of Attorney No. 34625
MAKATI CITY

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CONDITION
(Bank and its Subsidiaries and Affiliates)
As of December 29, 2005

ASSETS	
Cash & Cash Items	P 779,861,129
Due from Bangko Sentral	2,966,138,755
Due from Other Banks	1,422,497,359
Interbank Loans Receivable	44,925,484,837
Trading Account Securities (Net)	73,123,489
Investments in Bonds & Other Debt Instruments (Net)	30,248,944,919
Loans, Discounts & Advances (Net)	11,396,132,354
Equity Investments (Net)	1,440,401,139
Bank Premises, Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment (Net)	3,521,926,125
Other Assets (Net)	11,501,508,269
Property Owned/Acquired	5,812,546,375
Others	5,688,961,894
TOTAL ASSETS	P 108,276,018,375
LIABILITIES	
Demand Deposits	13,683,629,599
Savings Deposits	27,036,160,925
Time Deposits	19,507,333,732
Special/Other Deposits	1,968,117
Due to Bangko Sentral	35,521,089
Due to Banks	125,144
Outstanding Checks/Payment Orders	1,901,199,498
Bills Payable:	13,609,432,313
BSP - Rediscounts/Special Programs	19,045,668
Interbank Borrowings	12,788,315,953
Others	802,070,692
Unearned Income & Other Deferred Credits	1,229,143,392
Other Liabilities	12,096,586,491
TOTAL LIABILITIES	P 89,101,100,300
Minority Interest in Allied Undertakings/Subsidiaries/Affiliates	1,431,347
CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	
Capital Stock	P 7,087,057,923
Surplus	12,019,756,684
Surplus Reserves	66,672,121
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P 19,173,486,728
TOTAL LIABILITIES & CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P 108,276,018,375
CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	
Unused Commercial Letters of Credit	P 336,001,177
Bills for Collection	43,127,998
Spot/Future Exchange Sold	11,058,198,867
Spot/Future Exchange Bought	1,693,000,175
Assets Held under Trust & Investment Management Agreements	5,163,016,511
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TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	P 19,299,108,722

Other Information

1. Deposits of:
   - a) Government P 11,171,443,614
   - b) Banks 424,242,816
   - c) Trust Department 545,540,174
2. List of Bank's Financial Subsidiaries:
   - a) UnionBank Currency Brokers Corporation
   - b) UBP Capital Corporation
   - c) UBP Securities, Inc.
   - d) Interventure Capital Corporation

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PLDT, NTT to offer instant messaging

By Clarissa S. Batino

A UNIT OF THE PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Co. yesterday said that it had signed an agreement with Japan's NTT Communications Corp. to offer instant messaging services in the country.

Instant messaging or IM is a service that allows real-time communication through the Internet. IM works like a chat room, where two people are able to converse as if they are talking on the telephone. Yahoo Messenger and MSN are among the more popular IM services used today.

NTT Communications, which owns 13.98 percent of PLDT, said that it had developed the technology and the necessary applications to address and control the risks involved when using instant messaging.

With the removal of security risks, instant messaging is expected to benefit businesses with its real-time feature. But without the security measures in place, IM as a tool may ruin the integrity of a business.

"NTT is the world's largest provider of telecommunications services, and it is constantly developing new technologies while expanding to new markets," said Rey Espinosa, president of ePLDT, the technology arm of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. "This partnership allows us to work side by side with a global leader in strengthening the Philippines' ICT industry."

"Securing Instant Messaging services would certainly benefit users, particularly businesses that rely on communications in delivering their services to their end-customers," said Helen Marquez, ePLDT chief operating officer. "For these companies to get the trust of their clients, they have to ensure that all information being transferred, internal and external, are secured and could not be tapped."

Marquez also said that the country's booming call center and outsourcing industries will also stand to benefit from more secure IM services.

"Today, IM is used by government, securities, telecommunications and IT companies," said Takashi Togawa, NTT Communications' executive manager for Business Development.

Yield of long-term …

From page B1

year, but the Treasury wanted a steeper decline.

"That (an interest rate of 11.25 percent) is where the bulk of the bids are, so anything beyond that (could be rejected)," Cruz said in a briefing after yesterday's auction.

The market response for the 25-year debt offering was already favorable, given that tenders were higher than the programmed borrowing. But Cruz said the P4.43 billion worth of bids was still anemic compared with the government's expectations.

Considering the high level of liquidity and the need for long-term investments, especially by insurance companies, Cruz said the tenders should have been much higher.

He said the reason why bids failed to meet the expected amount was probably due to the confusion created by the government's Debt Consolidation Program.

Some investors could have misinterpreted that the government would offer additional debt instruments under the program.

Cruz clarified that the main feature of the program would be the swap of existing government securities held by investors with fresh issues of 3-, 5-, and 7-year bonds. The swap is scheduled on Feb. 10 for the 3-year bonds, and Feb. 24 for the 5- and 7-year bonds. The swap will stretch the average maturity of the government's domestic debt by at least a year.

Since some investors might have thought that the government intended to undertake new debt offerings, they were limiting their bids for other instruments, such as the 25-year bonds auctioned yesterday, to be able to participate in the Feb. 10 and 24 auctions.

The Debt Consolidation Program is mainly a swap and does not necessarily mean the government would offer additional debts.

The government will only offer additional debt instruments if the swap fails to generate the minimum volume expected by the Treasury.

The Treasury has set a minimum of P30 billion worth of existing government securities to be exchanged for 3-year bonds, a minimum of P25 billion for the 5-year, and P20 billion for the 7-year paper.

Cruz said the government would only offer additional debt paper if the actual volume of swap transactions failed to meet the minimum amounts set. For instance, if only P25 billion worth of existing securities were exchanged for the 3-year bonds, then the Treasury would auction P5 billion in additional debts to meet the P30-billion minimum requirement.

Capital raised through IPOs hit P55.5B in '05

Biggest since the '97 Asian financial crisis, says PSE chief

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

FRESH CAPITAL RAISED THROUGH initial public offerings grew 25-fold to P55.5 billion last year, from P2.1 billion in 2004.

This was the biggest recorded total IPO size at the Philippine Stock Exchange since the Asian financial crisis in 1997, the exchange said in a statement yesterday.

Of the P55 billion worth of capital raised, P33.6 billion went to the coffers of Ayala-led utility firm Manila Water Co. Inc. and SM Investment Corp. of mall tycoon Henry Sy, which held their IPOs last year.

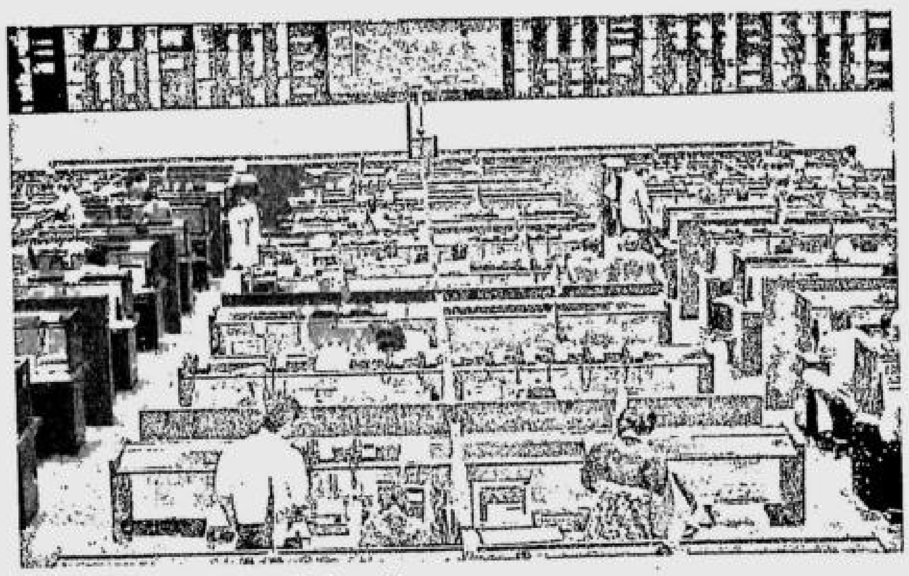
The remaining P21.9 billion was raised by several firms that listed additional shares to replenish their capital.

Last year also saw the value of equity from offerings exceeding P50 billion for the first time since 1997.

"Practically all stock market indicators confirmed that we enjoyed a banner year in 2005," Lim stressed.

"Some PSE indicators showed their best levels in at least five years, while others were at their all-time-high marks."

For instance, total market capitalization in 2005 peaked at P5.9 trillion, higher by 25 percent than the previous high of P4.7 trillion which was recorded in 2004.



BOURSE expects more offerings this year.

Trading value amounted to P383.5 billion, 85.6 percent larger than the P206 billion recorded in 2004. Trading value in 2005 was also the biggest since hitting P781 billion In 1999.

Foreign transactions, which accounted for more than half of the trades, amounted to P392.7 billion or 76.2 percent more than the P222.8 billion in 2004.

Lim also noted that, for the first time since 2001, daily turnover exceeded P1 billion and averaged P1.6 billion, or twice the P800 million in 2004.

"It's safe to assume that proceeds from last year's initial and additional offerings are now funding new projects of the issuing companies and are creating new jobs for a lot of Filipinos," Lim noted. "That means that, in our own small way, we are helping the country mobilize resources to provide Filipinos with a basic need, and I am referring to employment."

"But the PSE can sustain the flow of fresh capital only if the country maintains a stable political and economic foundation," Lim said.

"Having said that, we can only hope that we, as a people, will continue to maintain our sobriety even as our political leaders debate over political issues," Lim added.

PSE data showed that proceeds from offerings hit P60.8 billion in 1995, but shrank to P48 billion in the following year and to P32.4 billion in 1997. After the 1997 financial meltdown, proceeds from offerings managed to jump over the P40-billion hurdle only twice—in 1999 (P40 billion) and 2002 (P40.6 billion).

In 1996, or the year before the regional capital market meltdown, IPOs raised P27 billion in equity. In 1997, the figure dropped to P10.1 billion and to P1 billion in 1998. It remained low up to 2001 and in 2002, IPO proceeds recovered and hit P4 billion, only to drop anew to just P200 million the following year.

This year, the PSE said it was looking forward to the IPO of power generation company First Gen Corp., which aims to raise P17-19 billion from the offering of new and secondary shares next month.

Palace OKs P800-M Clark terminal expansion

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—President Macapagal-Arroyo approved the P800-million expansion of the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport's passenger terminal.

Clark Development Corp. president Antonio Ng said Ms Arroyo, in the National Economic and Development Authority board meeting in Malacañang on Jan. 17, also agreed to the proposal of the Department of Transportation and Communication to source the project's funding requirement from the Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa).

Ng said the terminal's expansion, to be carried out in two years, is aimed to increase the capacity of the DMIA to serve 1.5 million passengers.

Ms Arroyo gave her nod after officials of the state-owned CDC and Clark International Airport Corp. presented updates on the status of international flights to and from the DMIA, which used to be the biggest American military airport in the Asia-Pacific region.

Ng said flights, made by low-cost airlines, now cover seven major destinations in Asia.

From Clark, Tiger Airways flies to Singapore and Macau. Air Asia serves the Kota Kinabalu-Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok routes.

South Korea's Asiana Airlines, Taiwan's Far East Transport Airlines Corp. and Hong Kong's China Rich and HK Express operate from Clark.

CDC and CIAC officials projected the flights to increase from 39 to 70 weekly.

Chinese Ambassador Li Jinjun earlier committed to encourage budget airlines based in China to fly to Clark.

A Kuwaiti group also proposed to develop a new international passenger terminal through a build-operate-transfer scheme.

Ng said Ms Arroyo also ordered the DOTC to draft an executive order making the DMIA as a development route for the government's liberalized air policy.

The EO, Ng said, sought to grant "more flexibility" to foreign airlines in terms of securing permits to operate at the DMIA.

He said this would avoid instances when flights had to be grounded, as in the recent case of a Tiger Airways flight from Clark to Macau when its temporary license lapsed. It was given a 20-day permit to fly to Clark.

Under the liberalized policy covering DMIA, the government waived the $300 customs immigration quarantine fee and exempted air carriers from payment of travel tax.

"We want these requirements simplified for our air carriers so the operations at the airport would not be affected," Ng said.

Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Inflation seen to remain stable

MUMBAI—THERE IS LITTLE SIGN OF ANY inflationary pressures building in the Philippine economy on account of higher oil prices or rising demand, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said here on Monday.

Monetary policy therefore was appropriate, but the central bank remained vigilant and would act if rising fuel prices caused price pressures to build, Diwa Guinigundo, deputy governor of the BSP said.

Guinigundo said the BSP had based its forecasts for 2006 on an assumption that the price of the oil the country was buying would average at about $55 a barrel in 2006. US crude futures rose above $69 a barrel to their highest since September on Monday.

"Even if Brent prices went up to such levels, as long as the Dubai price of oil averages about $55, then we are safe about our assumptions," Guinigundo said, speaking on the sidelines of an International Monetary Fund conference in Mumbai.

The central bank would have to review policy settings only if higher fuel prices led to increases in wages, changed inflationary expectations or caused core inflation to rise, he said.

Guinigundo said a planned rise in the sales tax to 12 percent from 10 in February could cause an upward blip in inflation levels, but that would be short-lived.

The BSP raised rates three times in 2005 by a total of 75 basis points. Its overnight borrowing rate is 7.50 percent and its lending rate is 9.75 percent, the highest in four years.

It expects inflation of 7.5 to 8.2 percent in 2006.

"Under inflation-targeting, we are not bound to respond to the foreign exchange swings, but to the extent that there are potential inflationary implications then we will consider a review of the monetary policy settings," he said.

"Or if there is a buildup in demand pressure, particularly shown in any run-up in core inflation. Well, so far we have not seen that," Guinigundo said.

Reuters

Business upbeat on economy

PRESIDENTIAL CONSULTANT FOR ENtrepreneurship Jose Ma. Concepcion III is upbeat on the economy this year in view of the peso's strengthening.

Citing the strong influx of overseas Filipino workers' dollar remittances, increased tourism and foreign investments as the main drivers of the peso's surge in 2005, Concepcion urged entrepreneurs and businessmen to "believe that the Philippines can make it" and to leave politics to the politicians.

He also urged businessmen during the first general membership meeting of the Filipino-Indian Chamber of Commerce held recently to focus instead on maintaining the momentum built last year.

Despite the improvements, Concepcion still sees a long road ahead. After expressing disappointment over the prevailing crab mentality and pessimism in the country, Concepcion said: "We need more Filipinos to serve as inspirations... and spread the spirit of optimism for this country to move forward."

Dutch bank eyes RP as BPO hub

By Doris C. Dumlao

DUTCH FINANCIAL GIANT ING BANK IS considering the Philippines, with its huge pool of skilled and English-speaking workforce, as a business process outsourcing hub for its global operations.

ING Bank general manager for the Philippines Manuel Salak said the local unit had submitted a proposal to the group's headquarters in Netherlands to transfer some of its business functions to the Philippines.

"We actually presented to ING the prospects of a BPO platform here in the Philippines because the Philippines has become a preferred BPO center along with India," Salak said in a recent press briefing.

"ING is considering that (our proposal) along with other alternatives. Hopefully, we'll make some progress there," he said.

He said former Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima, prior to his resignation, accompanied the delegation organized by ING Philippines to Europe along with other multinational companies with successful BPO centers in the country such as Phillips and Shell.

"We gave a broad overview of what the Philippines can offer," Salak said, noting that telecommunications giant Globe Telecommunication backed up the presentation.

"It was a first-pass exchange of ideas of what could be possible. The next step is to see the details," Salak said.

The Philippines has become an attractive BPO hub for big financial conglomerates such as Citibank, HSBC, JP Morgan, AIG and Deutsche Bank.

Visiting executive Eric Boyer de la Giroday, a member of ING Group's executive board and global head for wholesale banking, said: "The development of outsourcing for ING is certainly a reality, in terms of the large operations that we have."

"If you talk about the US, for instance, we have a very large insurance operations there. We have there 10,000 people," De la Giroday said.

ING's BPO operations outside its home country were marginal at this stage, he noted, and were concentrated in central Europe.

Unlike other global financial institutions with more extensive BPO operations, De la Giroday noted that ING was restricted by the fact that English was not the primary language in its home country.

Ecozone exports up 6.% in '05

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC ZONES LAST year posted a 6.3-percent increase in exports to $32.9 billion from $30.9 billion in 2004.

The Philippine Economic Zone Authority said comparative export revenues from the four government-owned ecozones jumped 17.4 percent to $8.1 billion last year form $6.9 billion in 2004.

Baguio City Economic Zone shipped out $3 billion worth of products; Cavite Economic Zone, $2.95 billion; Mactan Economic Zone, $1.8 billion; and Bataan Economic Zone, $355.4 million.

Of the public ecozones, Cavite performed best with a growth rate 48 percent from $2.03 billion, followed by Bataan's 25 percent growth.

The 49 private or special economic zones shipped out about $24.4 billion worth of products, up by 2.4 percent from $23.8 billion.

The top five SEZ exporters in 2005 were Gateway Business Park with $5.79 billion; Laguna Technopark Inc. with $5.63 billion; Amkor Technology SEZ, $1.88 billion; Carmelray Industrial Park I, $1.48 billion, and Carmelray Industrial Park II, $1.22 billion.

Among the five, Carmelray Industrial Park II posted the biggest growth at 47.6 percent from $824.4 million in 2004, while top SEZ exporter Gateway Business Park reported a growth rate of 16.8 percent.

Carmelray Industrial Park I posted an increase of 39.6 percent but Laguna Technopark and Amkor reported a decrease of 24.9 percent and 12.3 percent, respectively.

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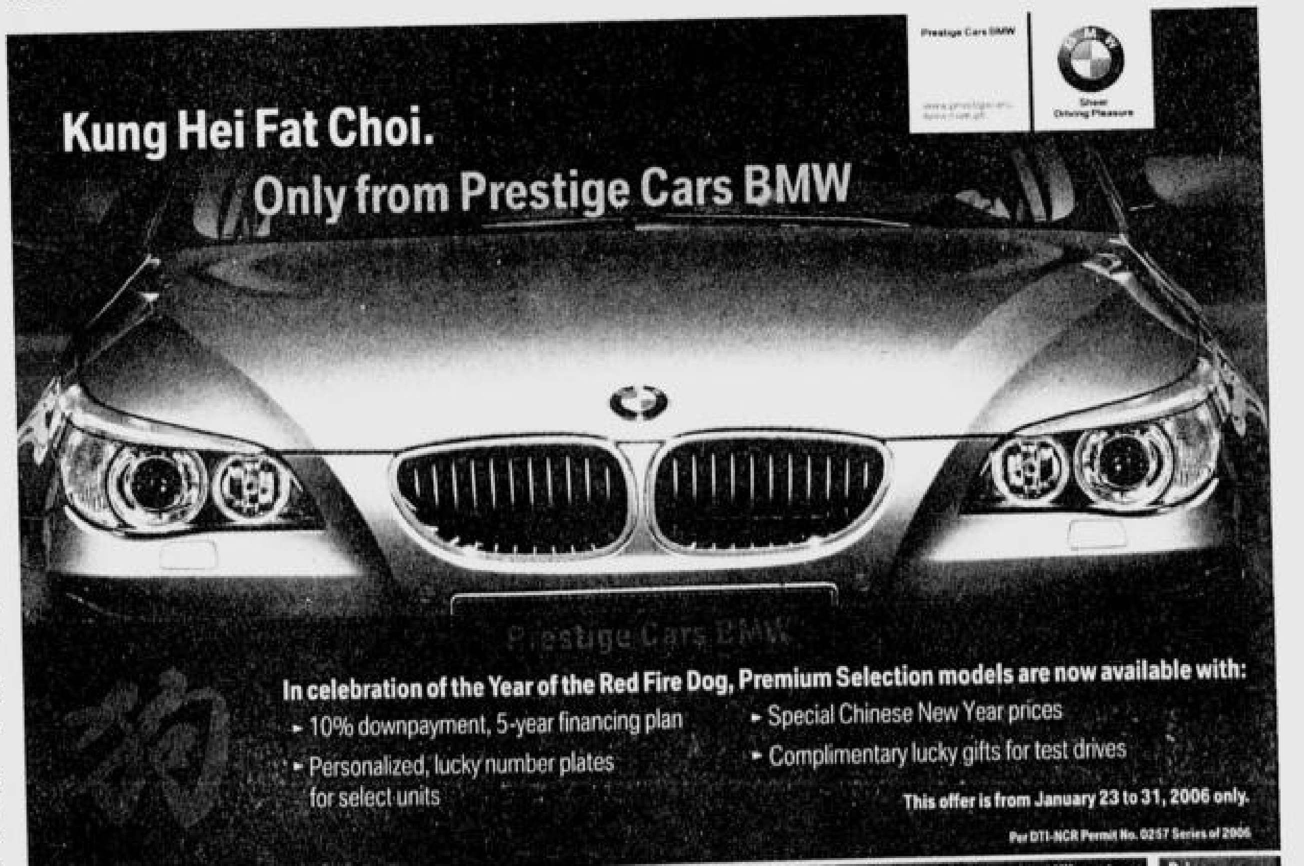

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Premium Selection	Year	Color	Kilometers	Price
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BMW 318i Exec.	2004	Titanium Silver	25,000	P1,747,888
BMW 318i M Sport	2004	Titanium Silver	14,267	P1,787,888
BMW 320i (E90)	2005	Arctic	8,000	P2,110,888
BMW 320i (E90)	2005	Titanium Silver	10,000	P2,110,888
BMW 325i Exec. (E90)	2006	Titanium Silver	3,500	P3,313,888
BMW 325i Exec.	2004	Black Sapphire	17,000	P1,987,888
BMW 325i M Sport	2004	Imola Red	12,382	P2,479,888
BMW 520i Limo.	2005	Mystic Blue	1,401	P3,787,888
BMW 525i Exec.	2004	Black Sapphire	11,501	P3,787,888
BMW 525i Exec.	2006	Titanium Silver	3,513	P4,387,888
BMW X3 2.5i Exec.	2004	Black Sapphire	14,331	P3,279,888
BMW X3 2.5i SAV	2006	Alpine White	2,677	P3,258,888
BMW X5 3.0i Exec.	2004	Black Sapphire	13,153	P4,587,888
BMW X5 3.0d Exec.	2005	Titanium Silver	4,000	P4,888,000
BMW Z4 2.5i Roadster	2004	Black Sapphire	4,595	P2,888,000

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PUBLIC NOTICES

ANNOUNCEMENT

Notice is hereby being given that spouses EDWIN and AMELIA RESURRECCION of No. 87 Binbing Pag-Asa St., Taytay, Rizal are looking for 3-C Commercial Credit and Lending Investor which last held office at Leoncio Building, Rizal Ave., Taytay, Rizal in favor of which they have executed a Deed of Mortgage in the Sum of FIFTY THOUSAND PESOS (P50,000.00) on May 29, 1992 for purposes of redeeming their property and payment of the amount of mortgage. (PDI-Jan. 25, Feb. 1, 8, 2006)

LEGAL NOTICE

I, Praxedes R. Luna do hereby notice public that the parcel of land at Bambang Pasig City left by Roman Santos had sworn an affidavit of adjudication notarized by Atty. Ernesto F. Bonifacio of Pasig City with Doc. No. 384, Page No. 78, Book No. 60, Series of 1999. (PDI-Jan. 25, Feb. 1, 8, 2006)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Alfredo Abiera & Jessie Abiera was extrajudicially settled by their heirs before Notary Public Atty. Thomas M. Valmonte of Valenzuela City per Doc. No. 467, Page No. 90, Book No. II, Series of 2006. (PDI-Jan. 11, 18 & 25, 2006)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Pecton Mercantile Inc. (#15 Gilmore Ave. QC) O.R. w/S.N. 94701-50 (unused #94715-50) was lost on Jan. 9, 2006. Unauthorized use of said O.R. will not be honored (PDI-Jan.23,25&27,2006)

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NOVENA PRAYER
O Immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of our Lord Jesus and our Mother, penetrated with the most likely confidence, in thy all-powerful and never failing intercession, manifested so often through the Miraculous Medal, with thy loving trustful children. Implore thee to obtain for us, the grace and favors we ask during the Novena, if they be beneficial to our immortal souls, and the souls for whom we pray. Thou knowest, O Mary, how our souls have been the sanctuaries of thy Son who hits inequity. Obtain for us then a deep hatred of sin and that purity of heart which will attach us to God alone so that our every thought, word and deed may tend to His greater glory. Obtain also for us a spirit of prayer and self-denial that we may recover by penance what we lost by sin and at length attain to that blessed abode where thou art the Queen of angels and of men. Amen.

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Department of National Defense

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
(DND-Proper Procurement of Services)

I. The Department of National Defense, through DND-Proper Bid and Awards Committee, invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following projects:

General Services for CY-2006 (Re-Bidding)

Name of Project	Description	Approved Budget for Contract (ABC)
1. Purified Drinking Water	Delivery of Purified Drinking Water for DND employee	751,322.88
2. Subscription Expenses	Subscription of foreign magazines and local newspapers for OSND offices	1,177,000.00
	TOTAL	Php1,928,322.88

II. The schedule of activities as follows:

ACTIVITIES	VENUE	DATE	TIME
Issuance of Bid Documents	Procurement Br. OAS Bldg., DND	26 Jan – 10 Feb. 2006	9:00 AM–5:00 PM
Deadline for Submission/Opening of Bids	OAS Annex Bldg.	10 February 2006	9:30AM–5:00 PM
Bid Evaluation	These shall be in accordance with the prescribed periods allowed in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR)-A of R.A. 9184 dated 10 January 2003		
Post-Qualification			
Issuance of Notice of Award			

III. Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of non-refundable amount as indicated below to the DND-Proper BAC Secretariat, Procurement Branch, Office of Administrative Services, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City, Tel. No. 911-8118:

Name of Project	Cost of Bidding Documents
General Services	
1. Purified Drinking Water	800.00
2. Subscription Expenses	1,200.00

Bidders who have secured the bidding documents in the previous bidding in any of the above projects may no longer secure new bidding documents but they are encouraged to get updates from the DND-Proper BAC Secretariat.

IV. The eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted. All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations Part-A (IRR-A).

V. To facilitate eligibility checking, manufacturers and/or suppliers who wish to participate in the public bidding may apply for registration with the DND-Proper BAC Secretariat at least fifteen (15) days prior to the scheduled submission and opening of bids for the procurement projects they wish to participate.

VI. The OSND assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

VII. The OSND reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any formality and award the Contract to the bidder whose proposal is the most advantageous to the government as evaluated by the DND-Proper Bids and Awards Committee (DND-Proper BAC).

VIII. The Invitation is also posted in the DBM Procurement Service website at www.procurementservice.org., and the DND website, in accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184. Further, it shall also be posted at conspicuous places in the premises of the Department of National Defense (DND).

(Sgd.) **ASSISTANT SECRETARY RUBEN F CIRON**
Chairman, DND-Proper BAC

(PDI – January 25 & February 1, 2006)

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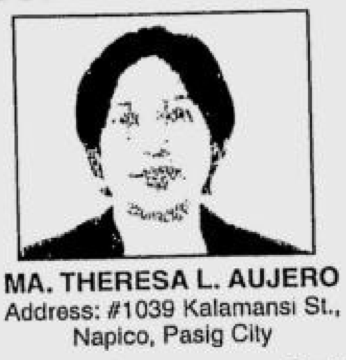

MA. THERESA L. AUJERO
Address: #1039 Kalamansi St.,
Napico, Pasig City

The public is notified that the person appearing in the picture has been terminated for cause and is no longer connected with PLPI Finance, Inc., in any capacity whatsoever, effective December 20, 2005. Any transactions made and entered into with this person after said date will not be honored by the company.

(PDI--Jan 25, 2006)

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LILIA CLIMACO CASALS

Peacefully joined her Creator on Sunday, 22 January 2006 at the age of 74.

She is survived by:

Her loving husband	**Dr. Leon Y. Casals**
Son & daughter-in-law	**Dr. Leon "Jun" C. Casals, Jr. & Dr. Mary Monalee "Monette" Ceniza Casals**
Grandchildren	**Lee Joseph & Luke Raymond Casals**
Brothers, sister & in-laws	**Julio (†) & Ellen** **Agustin (†) & Charito** **Carlos & Lydia** **Rodolfo & Nelda** **Jose Jr. "Boy" & Blanquita** **Consuelo "Inday" & John Kingsley**

Nephews, nieces, relatives and friends request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Presidential Chapel, Cosmopolitan Funeral Homes, Nivel Hills, Lahug, Cebu City. Interment will be on Thursday, 26 January 2006 at the Cebu Memorial Park, Banilad, Cebu City after the 8:30 a.m. funeral mass at the Redemptorist Church.

In lieu of flowers, a donation to any of her favorite charities will be greatly appreciated: ICM Charity Clinic, Mother Teresa of Pasil and Regional Blood Coordinating Council (RBCC).

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."

— 2 Corinthians 5:8

In Loving Memory of

EDITHA MONASTERIO PULIDO

On The 18th Annivesary of Her Birth To Eternal Life
(6 June 1934 - 25 January 1988)

The **EDITHA MONASTERIO PULIDO MEMORIAL FOUNDATION, INC.** and her family request the pious reader to pray for her eternal repose.

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even if he dies; and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die."

JOHN 11:25-26

"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me... Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."
Psalm 23:4 & 6

Our Dearly Beloved

DR. OSCAR "OCA" R. ORDINARIO

now rests in the infinite warmth and embrace of our Lord.
He joined our Creator on the 22nd of January, 2006,
at the age of 59.

His loving wife, **DR. LOLITA PADILLA**; children, **SHEILA, SUZETTE, SHARON & BAIT REYES, MYLENE** and **CARLO**; sisters, **CORA** and **GLORIA**; brothers, **ARTHUR** and **ISMAEL** and all his relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

Interment will be announced later.

FIDEL SOLIS MANGUERA

February 4, 1922 - January 24, 2006

His loving wife **Felicidad Abgelina**; doting children **Edong & Naty Corachea, Delia & Roger (†) Napiza, Zeny & Pepe Tapia, Ellen & Rene Lantin, Mamat & Rene Hernandez, Mano & Lolet Olan, Former Vice-Mayor Boy & Dra. Bebeth Rosales**; together with his adoring grandchildren, relatives and friends, thank the Lord for his life, and pray for the eternal rest of his soul.

His mortal remains lie in state at the family residence at Gen. Luna St., Sabang, Lipa City.

The Mass of the Resurrection will be held at the San Sebastian Cathedral, Lipa City, on Sunday, January 29, 2006 at 12:00 noon.

Interment follows at the Lipa Floral Garden.

Please omit flowers. The family will sincerely appreciate donations to his name to St. Francis de Sales Theological Seminary, Marawoy, Lipa City

---

In Loving Memory

on the 25th Death Anniversary of

Mariano B. Peñaflorida

who passed away on 26 January 1981

Masses will be offered Thursday,
26 January 2006 at the following:

Sanctuario de San Antonio *Forbes Park*	12:15 noon
Sanctuario de San Jose *Greenhills*	7:15 a.m.
St. Alphonsus Mary de Liguori *Magallanes*	6:00 p.m.
Our Lady of Beautiful Love *Merville*	6:00 p.m.
Parish of the Holy Sacrifice *U.P.*	6:00 p.m.
St. Joseph's Church *Pototan, Iloilo*	5:30 a.m.
St. Clement's Church *La Paz, Iloilo*	5:30 p.m.

The family requests relatives, friends, and pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

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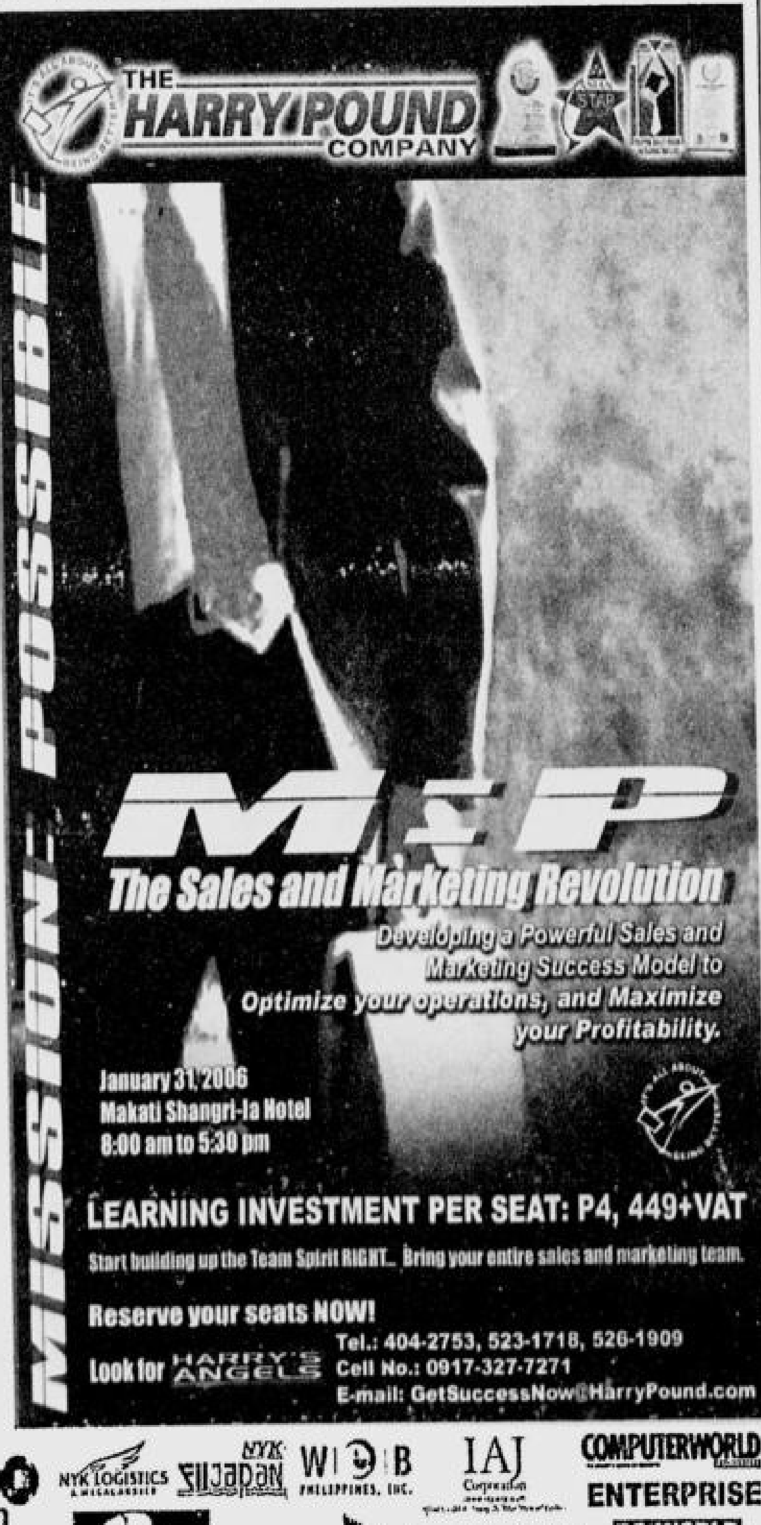
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GATHERING OF BIGWIGS IN BUSINESS
Philippines, Inc. held its Christmas and New Year's Lunch last Jan. 6 at Cravings Restaurant, Frasers Place Serviced Residences in Makati City. In photo (standing from left) are George T. Yang, president and chairman, Golden Arches Development Corp.; Fausto R. Preysler, Jr., president and chairman of the board, Smith Bell Group; Antonio A. Lopa, chairman and president, Mantraco, Inc.; Melesa D. Chua, president and CEO, Quadrillion Group of Companies; Amb. Donald G. Dee, president, Yarn Ventures; Sergio R. Ortiz-Luis, Jr., chairman, Export and Industry Bank; Fernando P. Jacinto, Jr., executive vice president, F. Jacinto Group, Inc.; Jose Manuel G. Romuladez, chairman and CEO, FCB Worldwide, Inc.; Amb. Jose V. Romero, director, Rolls-Royce International Ltd.; Cezar T. Quiambao, president and CEO, Stradcom Corporation; Samie Lim, vice chairman & COO, Automatic Center; and William Gatchalian, chairman & president, Wellex Group, Inc. Seated (from left) are Ceferino L. Benedicto, Sr., president and CEO, Benedicto Steel Corp.; Amb. Jose E.B. Antonio, chairman and CEO, Century Properties Group; Amb. Felimon R. Cuevas, chairman and president, Amalgamated Motors Phils., Inc.; Jesus M. Pineda, Jr., president and CEO, Ugong Trade Holdings, Inc.; Miguel B. Varela, president, Transunion Corp.; Annie C. Tan-Yee, president, Celestra Motors; Erlinda D. Callaghan, CEO, Second Opinion Phils., Inc.; and Oscar C. De Venecia, chairman and president, Basic Consolidated Inc. Philippines, Inc. is comprised of representatives from different business organizations in the Philippines which include the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI), Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP), Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Inc. (FFCCCII), Philippine Exporters Confederation, Inc. (Philexport), Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, Philippine Lighting Association, Manila Overseas Press Club, and the Philippine Retailers Association (PRA).

Move Up to World-Class

Kaya Natin!

PHILIPPINE MARKETING ASSOCIATION

MOVE UP TO WORLD-CLASS

Kaya Natin!

THE ASSOCIATION IS DETERMINED to inculcate this mindset among its membership and the marketing practitioners in general, through programs throughout the year that will inspire, stimulate, and nourish a world-class attitude and way of doing marketing!

"World-class" defines a clear performance standard which will enable local marketers to level the playing field with the global pluyers. It is an exacting, demanding, and strict criterion.

This is a bold aspiration which the logo reflects with the use of big, bold and strong letters.

"Can Filipino-owned marketing companies measure up to world-class standards?

The answer, proudly, is "Of course! Jolibee, Globe Telecoms, PLDT and Smart, Ayaln Corporation, San Miguel Corporation, URC Corporation are world-class Filipino companies, just to name a few."

As these and other Filipino-owned companies have shown the world, Kaya Natin!

And the theme captures this spirit, with confidence, by integrating the statement in the logo!

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Messages

My warmest greetings to the Philippine Marketing Association (PMA) as you hold your 52nd Anniversary Commemoration and Induction of New Officers.

Your theme, "Move Up World Class," manifests your steadfast commitment to strengthen Philippine economy. By aiming to respond to the continuous requirements of industries for strong branding, you help make Filipino industries more competitive in the world market by enabling them to take advantage of our world-class manpower.

It is my hope that you will continue to do your share in generating employment opportunities for our people.

Let us work hand-in-hand to create a conducive business environment for local and foreign investors. For your part, we have set in place our revenue generating and fiscal reform programs. Together, we can truly bolster our economy that is now ready for take off.

I wish you all the best in your future endeavors.

Gloria Arroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

Today marks the end of the 51st year of the Philippine Marketing Association and the year of Marketing Convergence. I would like to personally relay my sincerest thanks and appreciation for all the hard work that the 2005 Board has given to the association to make every event a landmark success. This same appreciation goes to the membership of the association who gave their overwhelming support last year, by jam packing membership meetings, filling in education seminar and conference seats, and contributing to the many events and activities of our association.

As the dawn follows every sunset, I congratulate and extend my best wishes to the incoming 2006 Board of Officers and Directors. With the theme of "Move Up to World-Class", may you bring our association to new heights, and highlight to everyone in the world that the Filipino indeed are world-class.

Congratulations and Mabuhay!

DONALD PATRICK L. LIM
(Outgoing President)

The world has shrunk, but the battlefield has become global!

Satellites, computers, wireless communications, digital technology have compressed geography so that virtually anybody, anywhere can only be a fingertip away on a cell phone.

And because even the latest technology can now be accessible anywhere, it has revolutionized business processes and lifestyles all over the world in a way we used to imagine only in science fiction movies.

As a result, we are confronted by an even more competitive global business environment where only the finest, the most prepared and skillful can expect to survive.

More than ever, the law of the business jungle prevails - "Matira ang Matibay."

That is why the incoming directors of the association for 2006 chose for its theme "Move up to World-Class. Kaya Natin."

As the country braces for the onslaught of powerful global companies with heavy logistical resources, local businesses can survive only when it measures up to the stringent standards of international marketing! There is no other way.

"World-class" defines a clear performance standard which will enable local marketers to level the playing field with the global players. It is an exacting, demanding, and strict criterion.

The association is determined to inculcate this mindset among its membership and the marketing practitioners in general, through programs throughout the year that will inspire, stimulate, and nourish a world-class attitude and way of doing marketing!

The question is - "Can Philippine marketing companies measure up to world-class standards?

For anybody who asks that question, the answer, proudly, is "Of course! We have Jolibee, PLDT and Smart, Globe Telecoms, Ayala Corporation, San Miguel Corporation, URC Corporation, just to name a few."

The challenge is to make that world-class standard the norm for the country's marketing companies. And the Philippine Marketing Association can be a major contributor to that effort!

As the said companies have shown the world, KAYA NATIN!

TOMAS C. BANGUIS
Incoming President

GUEST OF HONOR AND INDUCTING OFFICER

Gerardo C. Ablaza, Jr.

GERARDO "GERRY" C. Ablaza, Jr., president and chief executive officer of Globe Telecom, represents the model "world-class" Filipino executive who has earned international stature and respect for management expertise and marketing creativity.

Conferred the "Asia Business Leader of the Year" and "CEO's Choice Award", in May 2004 in Shanghai, China, he is the first Filipino CEO to win either awards, and the very first Asian CEO to win both awards. In the highly competitive telecommunications industry, he has the supreme distinction of being named "Best Asian Telecom CEO". In the Telecom Asia Awards held in Singapore in June 2004.

These awards reflects the high esteem Gerry Ablaza enjoys internationally with his brilliant, stewardship of Globe Telecom which he transformed from a minor player in 1998 when he assumed the reins of the company, to a premier, profitable, cutting-edge company today.

Gerry has demonstrated to the international business community that a Filipino can excel even in the most competitive industry, the fast-paced telecommunications business, which demands the utmost in creativity and innovation.

2006 BOARD of Officers and Directors signing Code of Ethics

Business Advisory: The Philippine Marketing Association NOT affiliated with the Philippine Marketing Excellence

The way to a customer's heart: Chowking's 'Braveheart' Marketing

BEHIND EVERY SUCCESSFUL COMPANY IS A great marketing story waiting to be told.

Pioneering the quick-service (QSR) Oriental restaurant concept, Chowking offered steaming hot and delicious Chinese food served fast food-style by a smiling and friendly crew. Its stores donned bright and dynamic colors usually associated with American diners.

Looking at how it has grown over the years, the Chowking story is nothing short of phenomenal. In just five years, Chowking more than tripled its annual sales to P7.2 billion in 2004 from P1.9 billion in end 1999 when the company joined the Jollibee Group of Companies.

Next to Jollibee, Chowking now leads fast food establishments in the store count with 323 Philippine stores as a result of its financial viability in key cities and sites nationwide. It has also started its aggressive global foray by recently setting up three stores in Indonesia in addition to its nine stores in the US and four in the United Arab Emirates.

Out of the Chinese box

The men and women who drove the brand made sure Chowking is not just always a step ahead. They also took seriously the two Chinese characters beside the company's logo, which, translated in English, mean "a cut above the rest." To do this, the company employed some "out-of-the-box" thinking.

It took a long hard look at its products and designed a product pipeline that will continually keep its customers coming back for more, for all parts of the day-breakfast, lunch, merienda (midday snack), dinner, and late dinner. Chowking relied heavily on the recommendations of its two Chinese chefs who never ran out of delicious food concepts. The brand even created a New Products Board, a group headed by the CEO himself in charge of creating new and exciting offerings and as needed, re-engineering of the existing ones.

Chowking advertisements were also designed and executed out of the ordinary. Instead of relying on celebrity endorsers, Chowking focused the spotlight on its biggest star: its mouth-watering Chinese food. Special cameras, not normally used by its competitors, were used during TV commercial productions to differentiate the look and feel of Chowking materials. With the images shown in very slow speed, viewers can almost smell and taste the steam coming out of a bowl of noodles. The image is strong enough to stimulate the eye and whet the appetite of every viewer who will most likely troop to the nearest Chowking store.

Chowking also used non-traditional advertising and relied heavily on outdoor ads to trigger product desire at points of purchase. It even defied convention and put up billboards and signages in places where there used to be none--at the roof of its stores, in front of gas stations and in areas that cannot hold big boards. As a result, the sales of Chowking stores with non-traditional outdoor advertising support have been hitting targets consistently.

Chowking also invested in in-store merchandising and even tapped one of the world's best menu board designers to make the Chowking menu board. The strategy paid off as customer visits and spending per transaction increased due to the variety of delectable dishes displayed in the menu boards.

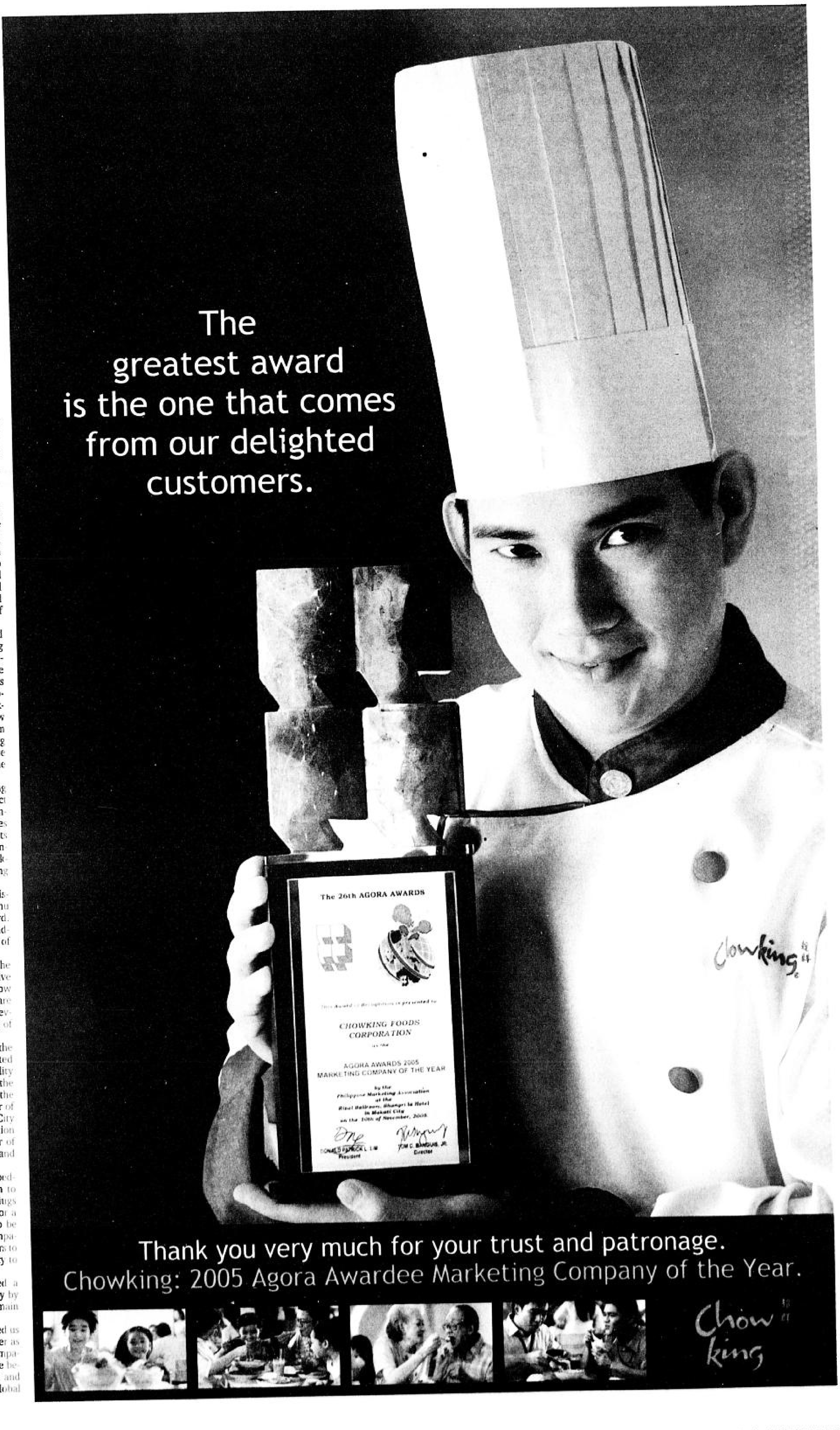
A latest innovation is the introduction of the open kitchen in Chowking stores. The innovative merchandising concept was adopted to show Chowking customers how the food they ordered are prepared and cooked right in the store, and that every Chowking store adheres to strict standards of cleanliness.

Consistent with its thrust of providing only the products of world-class quality, Chowking invested heavily in the automation of its production facility in Sucat. The facility even won accolades such as the "Most Outstanding Meat Processing Plant" in the National Capital Region for 2005 and a number of "Awards of Execellence" in sanitation from the City Government of Muntinlupa. To ensure distribution efficiency in its nationwide network, a number of depots are strategically located in the three island groups.

Another in-store marketing innovation is piped-in radio programming. Every store is tuned in to Chowking Radio that regularly plays product plugs and enticed in-store customers to come back for a visit or watch out for a new product about to be launched. Chowking Radio helped boost the company's sales as repetitive messages entice customers to frequently visit stores and raise their propensity to buy.

While every groundbreaking idea spawned a rash of imitations, Chowking believes it is only by moving fast and moving forward could it remain ahead of the game.

"These are market fundamentals that allowed us to compete in an environment that gets tougher as we go," Dela Rosa says. And as "Marketing Company of the Year" in the 2005 Agora Awards, "We believe that with sheer dedication, hard work and some luck, we can compete head-on with global brands in foreign markets as well."


The greatest award is the one that comes from our delighted customers.
The 26th AGORA AWARDS
CHOWKING FOODS CORPORATION
AGORA AWARDS 2005 MARKETING COMPANY OF THE YEAR
Chowking
Thank you very much for your trust and patronage.
Chowking: 2005 Agora Awardee Marketing Company of the Year.
Chow king

Ford launches Focus 1.6l Trend M/T

AFTER THE SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH OF THE Focus 1.8L Ghia and 2.0L Sport, Ford Group Philippines introduces the Focus 1.6L Trend. Its manual transmission engine allows drivers a fun and exciting drive while enjoying its handling, premium feel and safety features. True to form, this variant retains the key attributes the Focus is well-known for: best in European styling, finest German engineering and superior driving dynamics.

"Focus symbolizes our aggressive pace of product development and the introduction of 1.6L Trend signifies our commitment to meet the different lifestyle needs of the Filipino consumers", shares Luie Dy Buncio, vice president for sales and marketing, Ford Group Philippines.

Topnotch drivability

Driving quality has been a Focus trademark from the beginning. The Focus 1.6L Trend's Duratec engine is designed to be very efficient and maintains its fun-to-drive dynamic character while being dependable and delivering low levels of maintenance and extremely long service life. The MacPherson Strut Independent Front Suspension has been refined to ensure a balance between ride comfort and road holding. The "A" arm mounting points and bushes have been refined to ensure controlled movement and limit deflections. This ensures that wheel contact with the road is optimized. The Control Blade Multi-link Independent Rear Suspension provides excellent handling and ride quality and reduces noise, vibration, and harshness (NVH).

Class-leading dimensions including wheelbase and track width give the Focus a sure-footed stance and an improved interior package. Drivers will appreciate the levels of comfort that have been achieved in this car without sacrificing its signature agility, stability and precise reaction to steering inputs. The new chassis has been engineered to provide high levels of vibration isolation and stable confidence-enhancing body control, making it reassuringly comfortable even on coarse roads. Passengers will also experience a comfortable ride as there is more knee room.

A premium has been placed on ensuring that the interior of the Ford Focus offers unrivalled comfort and convenience that means effective air conditioning, high quality seating and premium trim detailing. The rear A/C vents are designed whereby the air conditioning is routed to the rear seats, giving passengers full control of their comfort.

The instrument panel is fully integrated with the center console in an inverted L-shape to provide a cockpit feel for the driver. The low, sporty seating position and 35/65 glass-to-metal ratio contributes to this feeling. Although you feel snug and secure, there is a significant improvement in roominess. The generous headroom of the previous Focus has been maintained while shoulder room has improved. Directly in front of the driver, the instrument panel is set for optimized visibility. Thanks to the intuitive ergonomic design, all controls and switches fall close to hand and are exactly where the driver would expect to find them. This provides a more comfortable and safer driving environment. The interior color and trim features Medium Light Stone which gives the Focus 1.6L Trend interior a warm and airy feel.

Other features include large, 12-liter glove compartment inside which is a plug for connecting new technologies such as MP3 players to the 4-speaker, single CD in-dash audio system. Customers can choose from any of the five colors available: Platinum, Jeans Blue, Magnetic Silver, Deep Rosso Red and Diamond White.

The Ford Focus 1.6L Trend M/T is manufactured at Ford's world-class Sta. Rosa plant. It is definitely an outstanding car offering customers a very attractive value proposition given its price at P788,000. For a test drive, visit any of the Ford dealerships in Metro Manila: Alabang, Balintawak, Commonwealth, Edsa Greenhills, Libis, Ford Global City, Manila, Quezon Avenue and Shaw Boulevard. In the provinces, Ford can be found in Bacolod, Cabanatuan, Cagayan de Oro, Cavite, Cebu, Dagupan, Davao, Iloilo, Pampanga and San Pablo.

For more information, call the Ford Focus hotline at 887-FORD or 889-FORD.

Bits Clips

Workshops launched by HR expert

START THE NEW YEAR with practical information and techniques on human resource management. Magnitude Human Resource Development celebrates its 17th year in people development with an interesting line up of seminars and workshops. A two-day workshop on job evaluation and salary structure kicks off on Jan. 26 and 27 at Discovery Suites, ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig. Participants will learn the Objectives of Job Evaluation, Job Evaluation and Performance Appraisal, Conducting Job Analysis, Writing Job Descriptions, Conducting a Salary Survey and Analyzing Survey Data, among other topics. Rafael Z. Perfecto, a member of the Society of Fellows in Personnel Management, will conduct the seminar and help HR practitioners apply effective, time-honored techniques based on their specific company structure. Register now at 806-3370. In February, watch out for "The Power of Motivation at Work", your guide to developing a motivated workforce.

'Friendship golf tournament'

THE PAST PUPILS OF DON BOSCO Technical Institute Makati Inc (PPDBTIMI) will be having a "Friendship Golf Tournament" at Royale Tagaytay Country Club on Saturday, Jan. 28. Tee off is from 8 a.m. to 12 noon. Proceeds will go to the scholarship program for deserving but less fortunate students enrolled in the Don Bosco Manpower Skill Training Center (MSTC). Sponsors include PLDT, Rapp Collins, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Bombo Radyo Philippines, Air Philippines, PCSO, Alfonso Hotel, Shimadzu Philippines, Optimum Media, Guaranteed Marketing, Triple Excellence, Jopers, Planters Bank, HP Print Trader Inc, American Express, Tower Inn, Gold's Gym, Club Morocco, Dockers, Zesto Philippines, RL Lapids Chicharon. For details, call Chito Avellana at 0917-8078905 or Myloh Alpuerto at 0906-3084777.

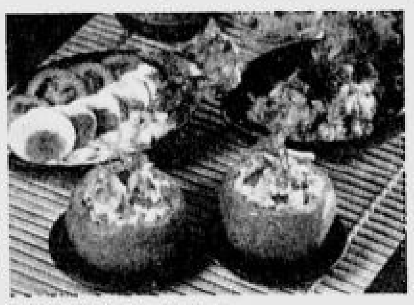
The right Filipino Timpla

IN THE FILIPINO DIALECT, TIMPLA connotes the Filipino's penchant for correcting the flavors in a dish to just the right level that will satisfy everyone's palate. The prodigious cook will not be satisfied until he gets the approximate mix of flavors and textures into it. In the context of Philippine cuisine, that encompasses the spectrum of flavors to include just the right alat (saltiness), asim (sourness), pait (bitterness), tamis (sweetness) and even anghang (spiciness). The textural symmetry of dishes can include the crunchiness of food as found in a just deep-fried crispy pata or the succulent freshness of steamed prawns.

Indeed, the various cuisine of the Philippines presents a stimulating canvas waiting to be tasted. They certainly have had a hand in Patricia Mesina's decision to focus on new Pinoy cuisine as the bedrock for her latest restaurant venture Timpla.

The husband and wife tandem are no strangers to the restaurant scene, having been the partners behind crowd favorites Kulinarya and Cascada. They expound on the decision to venture into a different culinary foray from the two previous ventures. "Kulinarya, when it started, had a European-inspired menu with an Asian twist. Cascada, on the other hand, was the reverse with a more Asian inspired menu with the European influence. Timpla veers away from that for a two-fold reason-primarily, to provide diners with a more affordable menu yet still reflecting the same attention to detail as their other outlets; secondarily, to elevate the Philippine cuisine just a notch yet still retain the same comfort food level that is familiar to everyone."

To do that, Carlo turned once again to his chef-partner-cum-wife Patricia, who was also the culinary thespian behind Kulinarya and Cascada's success. Timpla's menu reflects a straightforwardness that belies the effort that Patricia put into it.


TIMPLA'S side dishes

While still relying on the Filipino flavors that everyone knows, the preparation and presentation of each dish definitely surpasses those memories of lola's cooking. The Sisig Spring Rolls may evoke memories of the Pampangueno favorite but the dish deconstructs and reconstructs this into an all new rendering with the sisig wrapped in lumpia and served with a tangy citrus-soy dressing and spicy chili oil. What about the artistically laid out Lumpiang Ubod with Japanese crabstick served with a garlic-soy reduction or the crunchy Boneless Crispy Pata Roulade served with three sauces-an onion-garlic soy vinaigrette, hoisin-lechon sauce and sweet chili sauce?

Carlo reiterates that all the dishes are based on what he himself would eat everyday and yet would be very difficult to prepare at home. Hence, the concept of Timpla, which brings all the familiar flavors in one place for everyone to enjoy. In fact, Timpla's first outlet in Paseo Center has been so popular with the Makati crowd that a second outlet was merited at The Loop in ABS-CBN.

For comfort food that goes beyond everyday meals, Timpla is one restaurant that should not be overlooked. Proving the old adage that Filipino food can certainly be dished out everyday and not be too much, Timpla's menu cannot be appreciated in just one sitting but should be, like all memorable meals, seek to be remembered again and again. Timpla has certainly captured the visceral flavors of Pinoy cuisine that has the right timpla in it for every Filipino.

Timpla is at the 2nd floor Paseo Center, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City (812-5395) and at the ground floor of the ELJCC Building, The Loop, Mother Ignacia Street, Quezon City (411-2634).

Personnel Management Association of the Philippines

Founded 1956

MESSAGE

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Intramuros, Manila

I convey my warmest felicitations to the Personnel Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP) on the occasion of it Induction of Officers for the Year 2006 during its General Monthly Meeting at the Dusit Hotel nikko, Makati City on January 25, 2006.

This year's theme: "PMAP @ 50: Partnering with Business for Nation Building," is a well-timed event that proves the organization's commitment to making it not just a relevant organization but one of the government's dependable social partners.

The government, particularly the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), is grateful that PMAP is doing its share towards nation building. PMAP does not only develop people, it also creates a good working environment – a harmonious working place at that.

I wish that PMAP would continue on finding more avenues and other opportunities that will contribute to the national development. For years, PMAP has shown its ardent commitment of bringing out the best in our nation of competent people.

As you come together in your first general meeting this year, keep in mind the driving force behind this assembly: the need to fashion a bright future for our people, which is our shared responsibility. Whatever you accomplish here will certainly have an impact not only to your organization but also to the more important business of winning our country's future.

Again, my congratulations to PMAP's new set of officers. I wish PMAP success and thank you sincerely for making me a part of this event.

Mabuhay!

PATRICIA A. STO. TOMAS
Labor Secretary

New beginnings in the new year bring challenges that encourage us to be driven, innovative and focused. The assumption by the new Board of Directors of the Personnel Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP) of the mantle of leadership becomes more auspicious since PMAP observes its 50th founding anniversary this year.

Championing people, as enterprises navigate the terrain of dynamic, globally-competitive and borderless business environment, characterized by important changes and even more compelling challenges, gives greater significance to that secret to an enduring great company, revealed by Messrs. Collins and Porras: the ability to manage continuity and change. Every successful company must indeed learn to preserve its core values and purposes but must be willing to effect the necessary changes in its practices and strategies.

I am honored to serve the best and the most exulted human resource management professionals in the country. With our collective desire to contribute to national development, we shall surely attain our long-deserved goal of securing stability and prosperity for both Philippine business and the Filipino workingman.

Mabuhay ang PMAP!

EMERICO O. DE GUZMAN, FPM
2006 President

PMAP @ 50: Partnering with Business for Nation Building

Personnel Management in the Philippines Fifty years ago..

On September 29, 1956 a group of more than 30 men and women engaged in the practice of personnel management and headed by the then Personnel Manager of Insular Life, Perfecto "Pec" Sison gathered together at the Public Administration Building of the University of the Philippines, Manila to organize what has today become one of the largest professional organizations in the country, the **Personnel Management Association of the Philippines**. The charter members recall that "personnel management started as head-counting and records-keeping." As early as the late 50's however, personnel managers, through PMAP, took it upon themselves to respond to the more important needs of business and workers, by importing experts from America to learn new concepts and techniques in job evaluation and performance management.

Today, Human Resource Managers are Most Valuable Partners in Business

PMAP continues the tradition of its forefathers in redefining the role of human resources management to become more strategic business partners.

Personnel management has come a long way to become a direct source of leadership in driving organizational effectiveness. In today's highly competitive and fast-changing globalized environment, human resource management practitioners have evolved by necessity and through their own initiatives, to become Most Valuable Partners in business. Many HR executives now play key leadership roles in their organizations. The competence of Filipino HR professionals has been recognized with regional and global assignments in multinational corporations. PMAP this year also chairs the Asia Pacific Federation of Human Resource Management.

Courage at the Crossroads: On its Golden Year, PMAP Looks Outwards to Contribute to Philippine Society

PMAP is like a living person. Many men and women who achieve material success in the first half of their lives turn to a search for significance and contribution to society in the second half of their lives. On PMAP's golden year, we celebrate PMAP's maturity and courage in choosing to move from an inward orientation towards an outward orientation anchored on serving Philippine society. PMAP has launched projects that impact on national development (HR Agenda for Nation Building and Competency Requirements for the Philippine President).

Specially now that human resources have been recognized as the most important resource of the Philippines (some say the only real asset!),PMAP needs to speak up more clearly on issues that impact on people and competitive workplace management:

- PMAP will lead in supporting a labor code that will improve employment prospects of our people and encourage entrepreneurial growth and productivity
- We will articulate our stand and recommendations regarding the deployment of Filipino workers and professionals here and abroad
- We will initiate steps to bridge the widening gap between industry needs and talents produced by our academic institutions.

The 2006 Officers and Board of Directors: Creating More Value for PMAP, the Profession and the Country through:
Growing the HR Community
Organizational Strengthening and Capability Building
Labor Code and other Advocacies
Dedicated and Dynamic Leadership

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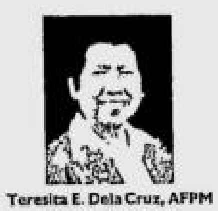
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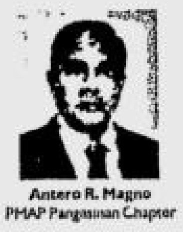
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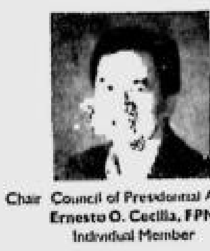
Chair Council of Presidential Advisers
Ernesto O. Cecilia, FPM
Individual Member

Executive Director
Gerardo A. Plana, FPM, IPMA-CP

Republic of the Philippines
SILAY CITY GOVERNMENT
Zamora Street
Silay City, Negros Occidental
Telephone No. (034) 495-0061 to 69
Local No(s) 234 & 236
Fax No. (034) 495-6711

Control Reference Number ________
Name of the Contract: Land Dev of 5 has. relocation site
Location of the Contract: Bonbon Village Brgy. E. Lopez, Silay City

Standard Form Number: SF-INFR-05
Revised on: July 29, 2004

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The SILAY CITY GOVERNMENT, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder contract:

Name of Contract : Land Development of 5 hectares Relocation Site
Location : Bonbon Village, Brgy. E. Lopez, Silay City
Brief Description : Site Preparation, road, drainage, sewerage, survey works
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) : Php 11,445,000.00
Contract Duration : 150 days

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	January 25 - February 2, 2006
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	January 25 - February 2, 2006
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	February 3-10, 2006
4. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check	February 3-15, 2006
5. Issuance of Bid Documents	February 4 - March 3, 2006
6. Pre-bid Conference	March 24, 2006
7. Dropping of Bids	April 3, 2006 1:30 PM
8. Opening of Bids	April 3, 2006 2:00 PM

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at General Services Office, upon their submission of LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of none to the Silay City GOVERNMENT's Cashier. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php 1,100.00 to the SILAY CITY GOVERNMENT'S Cashier.

The SILAY CITY GOVERNMENT assumes no responsibility to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) ATTY. RODNEY K. RUBICA
City Administrator
Chairman, Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI - Jan. 25 & Feb. 1, 2006)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
MAYNILA, PILIPINAS

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project / Brief Description	One job – Furnishing of materials, labor, tools equipment and supervision for the complete installation of two (2) units new Cooling Tower at Security Plant Complex located at East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City, in accordance with BSP scope of work, Equipment Schedule, Drawings and Technical Specifications
Approved Budget for the Contract	P18,460,000.00
Contract Duration	Within one hundred ninety six (196) calendar days after receipt of approved Contract.

Prospective bidders should have undertaken a similar project within the last five (5) years with an amount of at least 50% of the Approved Budget for the Contract. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	24 January 2006 – 10 February 2006
2. Pre-Bid Conference	10 February 2006, 2:00 PM
3. Opening of Bids	21 February 2006, 2:00 PM
4. Bid Evaluation	These shall be in accordance with the prescribed period allowed in the Implementing Rules & Regulations (IRR)-A of R.A. No. 9184 dated 10 January 2003
5. Post-qualification	
6. Notice of Award	

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P9,200.00 to the BSP Cashier.

The BSP assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The BSP reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.
Chairman

(PDI–January 25, 2006)

TransCo-Admin Dep't. receives ISO Award

THE ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT of the National Transmission Corporation (TransCo) is the latest addition to the firm's roster of ISO-certified units.

The Diliman-based department — which handles the procurement and delivery of needed goods and services; buildings, facilities and grounds maintenance; records management; and transportation facilities management – was recently awarded its ISO 9001:2000 certificate by audit firm TUV Philippines. This seal of quality management attests to TransCo's unrelenting pursuit of excellence and productivity in its everyday work.

In photo, Administration Department Manager Richard Nabong receives the ISO certificate from Ms. Carmina Espiron of TUV Philippines. Witnessing the awarding were VP-HRA & Finance Alexander Cortez, President and CEO Alan Ortiz, and ISO in-house consultant Faustino Manlucu.

National Transmission
...OME...
ADMINISTRATION D
O AWA

INVITING ESTABLISHED and UPCOMING
Interior Designers, Finishing Contractors and Furniture Designers

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Gilbert C. Yu, *FUAP, HFPIA*
innovator of the successful
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PHILIPPINE HEART CENTER
East Avenue, Quezon City
is now accepting applications for
Academic Year 2006

FELLOWSHIPS

I. **3-Year Fellowship Training Program in Adult Cardiology***
   - 3 years Residency in Internal Medicine accredited by PCP
   - PCP Diplomate

II. **1-Year Subspecialty Fellowship Training Program in Electrophysiology, Cardiac Rehabilitation, Non-Invasive Cardiology, Invasive Cardiology, Peripheral Vascular and Critical Care Cardiology***
   - Completed 3 years Fellowship in Cardiology in PCP and PCC accredited Institutions.
   - Submit a research proposal
   - Certificate of Fellowship

III. **Adult Pulmonary Medicine***
   - PCP Diplomate

* *Deadline for submission of application is on February 27, 2006*
* *Academic Year 2006 starts on April 1, 2006*

IV. **CV Anesthesiology Division****
   - 3 years Residency in General Anesthesia accredited by PBA (Board eligible)

V. **Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery Division****
   - 4 years Residency in General Surgery accredited by PCS (Board eligible)

VI. **Pediatric Pulmonary Medicine****
   - PCP Diplomate

** *Deadline for submission of application is on February 17, 2006*
** *Academic Year 2006 starts on April 1, 2006*

VII. **Pediatric Cardiology**
   - 3 years Residency in General Pediatric accredited by PPS
   - at least passed written examination for Diplomate in Pediatrics by the PPS

You can submit your application as soon as possible.

General Requirements:

1. Medical Diploma
2. Transcript of Records with the General Weighted Average
3. Itemized Board Rating
4. Three (3) Letters of Recommendation with at least one letter written by the Training Officer &/or Director of the previous Training Programs (duplicate letters or photocopies signed by different Doctors will not be accepted)
5. Four (4) pcs. 2" x 2" picture colored
6. Certificate of Residency in required specialty
7. Specialty Board Certificate in required specialty

Please address your communications to:

ARISTIDES G. PANLILIO, M.D.
Department Manager II
Office of Education and Research
Philippine Heart Center
East Avenue, Quezon City

For further inquiries, please contact Ms. Carmela M. Ocasion or Ms. Cleopatra Q. Palencia with Tel. Nos. 925-2401 locals 3234, 3235, 3236 & 3237 and Telefax 926-9622, or you can email to: oer@phc.gov.ph

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Republic of the Philippines
Leyte Metropolitan Water District
A. Mabini St., Tacloban City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Leyte Metropolitan Water District through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites interested contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the herein projects:

CONTRACT	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT
CONTRACT #1 – Security Services for Area I – Main office, Tacloban City; Nula-Tula Depot, Tacloban City; Serin Reservoir, Tacloban City; Tolosa Pumping Station, Tolosa, Leyte; Ambao Hill Reservoir; Tanauan, Leyte; and other future facilities. Number of guards: not less than thirty (30).	P5,016,000.00
CONTRACT #2 – Security Services for Area II – Rapid Filtration Plant, Brgy. Hibunawon, Jaro, Leyte; Dagami Settling Basin, Dagami, Leyte; and other future facilities. Number of guards: not less than thirty (30).	P5,016,000.00

The prospective security agency should be:

1. Duly licensed by the PNP (regular license to operate) for at least 3 years
2. At least two (2) years of experience within the last five (5) years in providing security services to any private or government offices having at least 200 personnel;
3. With at least 50 licensed firearms (i.e., shotgun, caliber .38 revolver, 9mm pistol)

Interested bidders may obtain the complete list of requirements for Eligibility Check from the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) of LMWD at its main office located at A. Mabini St., Tacloban City, starting *February 2, 2006* upon payment of a non-refundable fee of *P200.00* in the form of cash. Deadline for submission of Eligibility Requirements together with Letter of Intent shall be on *February 8, 2006* from *9:00 am to 5:00 pm*. All applicants shall be notified on the result of the eligibility check.

Bid Documents will be available only to eligible bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of *P5,000.00* to the Leyte Metropolitan Water District's Cashier on *February 17, 2006*. Pre-bid conference is scheduled on *February 23, 2006, 10:00 am* while submission and opening of bids shall be on *March 8, 2006 10:00 am* at LMWD main office, A. Mabini St., Tacloban City

Eligible security agencies may bid in all contracts. However, only one (1) Service Area Contract shall be awarded to a bidder.

The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The Leyte Metropolitan Water District assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expense incurred in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd.) VIOLETA C. SIMBULAN
BAC Chairperson

(PDI–Jan. 25 & Feb. 1, 2006)

PRISM
PRIVATE SECTOR MOBILIZATION FOR FAMILY PLANNING

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

The Private Sector Mobilization for Family Planning (PRISM), is seeking for **Family Planning Coordinators** for the following areas: Metro Cebu, Cebu Province, Metro Davao, and Davao Province.

The overall scope of this position will be valuable to PRISM's goal of developing the motivation and capacity of the private sector to be involved in family planning, specifically in implementing family planning in the workplace, developing the market for products and expanding private practice for family planning services.

Qualifications:

– College degree holder with post-graduate study an advantage
– Familiarity with the area and its political infrastructures
– Familiarity with the family Planning Program and Contraceptive Self-Reliance Initiative Program
– Exposure to NGO FP programs an advantage
– Appreciation of family planning program success factors
– Ability to develop good working relationships with various sectors and associations
– Work experience includes positions requiring leadership skills, as well as integrative and strategic thinking
– Residence in the area is preferred

Interested applicants should e-mail their application letter indicating the preferred project area and CV at jobs@prism.org.ph on or before 31st of January 2006. Please indicate the **subject** of your email as **"Position Code: FPC"**.

THE PHILIPPINE TROPICAL FOREST CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

a newly established environmental NGO managing an annual grants portfolio of +/- PhP 40 Million, is looking for an

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

who will directly supervise a lean Foundation staff, and grantees for monitoring and audit as well as technical assistance to proponents; who will act as spokesperson for the Foundation and be directly accountable to the Board.

Minimum Qualifications/Requirements include:

☐ Practical knowledge or equivalent experience in environmental/natural resource conservation, development or a related field;
☐ At least five years professional experience in environmental issues and demonstrated expertise in at least one of the Fund's six priority themes (see www.gubat.org).
☐ Management experience in community-oriented environment and development programs, and in project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation; Must have previous management experience and a working understanding of management principles;
☐ Excellent communication skills (written, verbal and interpersonal);
☐ Willingness to travel and undertake field visits;
☐ Ability to work well with a high-level Board of Trustees;
☐ Literacy in functional computer software;
☐ Experience of working with or managing ODA-funded programs an advantage.

Applications should be submitted to:

G/F Unit I Legaspi Towers 300
Roxas Blvd., Malate, Manila
or emailed to admin@gubat.org and dlis@pldtdsl.net
by February 10, 2006.

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND TESTING OF FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEM FOR TRANSCO BUILDINGS 2 (NCC) AND 3 (SO)

***Reference No.:** PB050525-RM0049 / PR No.: OAVP-05-0010484*

1. The *NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION, Head Office Region* (TRANSCO-HO) through the *2006 Corporate Budget approved by the TransCo Board* intends to apply the sum of *Php 7,937,977.71* being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for *PR No. OAVP-05-0010484, Supply, Installation and Testing of Fire Protection System of TransCo Buildings 2 (NCC) and 3 (SO)*. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The *TRANSCO-HO* now invites Bids from eligible Bidders who possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of the contract (at least Registered as "Small B" with classification for Fire Protection Work, Category "C or D" for the *Supply, Installation and Testing of Fire Protection System of TransCo Buildings 2 (NCC) and 3 (SO)*. Delivery of the GOODS is required *in One Hundred Twenty (120) days*. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below from January 19, 2006 to February 20, 2006 from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. and upon payment of a non refundable fee in the amount of *Php 1,000.00*. The method of payment will be *Cash*. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
5. The *TRANSCO-HO* will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on *February 7, 2006/10:00 A.M.* at the *Admin. Conference Room.*
6. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before *February 21, 2006 / 10:00 a.m.* All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following form or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible curency. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Form of Security	Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid
1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit (1% of ABC)	PhP 79,379.78
2. Bank guarantee (1.5% of ABC)	PhP 119,069.67
3. Surety bond (2.5% of ABC)	PhP 198,449.45
4. Foreign government guarantee (100% of ABC)	PhP 7,937,977.71

7. Bid opening shall be on *February 21, 2006 / 10:00 AM* at the *Admin Conference Room same address below*. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
8. The *National Transmission Corporation* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

National Transmission Corporation, Head Office Region
Mr. Armando N. Ochoa, BAC Chairman
MMD Office, G/F TransCo Main Bldg.
Power Center Complex, BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City.
Tel. No. (632) 9812206 / Fax No. (632) 9228432
Website: www.transco.ph

(Sgd.) ARMANDO N. OCHOA
Chairman, Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI - January 19 & 25, 2006)

Reviving Poetic Jousts at Luneta Park's Balagtasan

BALAGTASAN A POETICAL JOUST NAMED after Francisco Balagtas, a great 19th century Filipino poet and the author of Florante at Laura, was an offshoot of the traditional duplo, where two persons are given a topic to debate upon.

In 1924, Manila staged the very first formal Balagtasan in an attempt to revive old literary forms that were slowly losing its hold in the hearts of the Filipino people due to Americanization, an imposition which literary artists resisted since it did not represent their sensibilities as Filipinos.

Today, Balagtasan is considered as a Filipino traditional poetic argument performed by three poets: a pro, a con and a moderator who will debate on issues of public interest. But as it was in the American period, the general preference for western art forms has limited the venues for Filipino expressions as the Balagtasan.

In this light, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) takes efforts to put back the Balagtasan in the consciousness of the contemporary Filipino so that it may take its rightful place in the discussion of issues that can help bring back life and dignity to this nation.

In the persons of Teo T. Antonio and Michael Coroza (referred to as the modern day king and prince of Balagtasan), and Vim Nadera (considered father of performance poetry in the Philippines), a Balagtasan on the plight of Filipino overseas workers will take center stage at the National Arts Month opening ceremonies at the Luneta Park on Feb. 4 and 5.

With the theme Ani ng Sining 2006: Celebrating a Bountiful Harvest in the Arts, the opening ceremonies will feature Balagtasan alongside other outstanding performances in music, dance, film and visual arts.

The Ani ng Sining 2006 opening ceremonies is presented by NCCA through the Tunugan Foundation, Inc. in cooperation with the National Parks Development Committee. All performances are free to the public. For inquiries, please call 9260028.

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Editor Cesar D. Mangawang
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Automakers see 5% sales increase

By Tessa R. Salazar

WHEN CAR MANUfacturers say they see a 5 percent increase in overall sales this year compared to 2005, consider that optimistic. Why? Because, in the same breath, they also say that this increase would only be possible if crucial factors show enough stability: local politics, oil prices and the overall business climate.

At least, that's what Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc. (Campi) president Elizabeth Lee lays out on the table.

Arnelio Doria, Honda Cars Philippines Inc.'s deputy head for marketing, translates that 5 percent increase to roughly 4,850 more units sold across the whole auto industry. In 2005, the industry sold 97,000 units.

Free trade agreement

Daniel Isla, Toyota Motor Philippines' first vice president for marketing, says the Japan-Philippine Free Trade Agreement would also have to be looked into.

"If the JP-FTA is implemented this year, it will make CBU (completely built up) prices from Japan go down ... meaning, in time, more attractive car models from Japan will be seen on Philippine roads," he says.

Isla observes that the automotive industry has become even more competitive lately, with more international players from America and Europe as well as aggressive Korean brands making their way into the market.

Isla says that not only are there more vehicle models customers can choose from, there is also fiercer competition in terms of promotional activities, advertising and events. The marketing standards have been elevated. "Creativity," he adds, "is the name of the game."

Likely to continue

Lee, who is also senior vice president of Universal Motors Corp., adds that the auto industry ended 2005 with 63 percent of sales classified as commercial vehicles (CVs). More than half of all CV sales were attributed to LCVs, which comprise compact SUVs, pickup trucks, vans and full-size SUVs. Lee says this trend would most likely continue in 2006.

Says Lee: "Given the current market environment where the cost of doing business as well as the cost of living is seen to increase relative to previous years, the focus of buyers will even be more pronounced on value for money products. Buyers will be keen on the 'steak' than the 'sizzle' and new models will have to sell at competitive prices to grab significant market shares."

Doria says that if the trend on gasoline prices continues, fuel-efficient cars like the Jazz and City would be the cars of choice. He says the arrival of the new Civic models would also be welcome news, but he adds that this would make the other models look "old and out."

Most functional models

Isla says that with consumers' concern for rising fuel prices, Toyota has been experiencing a continuous upward demand for its Vios variants because of their fuel efficiency.

He adds, however, that multi-functional carriers will also be the "in" thing.

Says Isla: "The Innova type will continue to dominate the market. This can be attributed to the fact that Filipinos normally go on out-of-town trips with the family, thus, making the AUVs/MPVs as the most functional models in terms of seating and luggage capacity and overall comfort, at very reasonable price levels."

What makes the road rough for automakers

By Tessa R. Salazar

AS AUTOMAKERS HUNKER INTO WHAT could be a long drawn-out year for the business, they may be contemplating an age-old adage: What won't kill you will only make you stronger. Indeed, a confluence of old and new issues will pound the auto industry this year. How they weave their way through them should speak of the various players' resilience, creativity and downright business savvy.

The most feared "superstorms" threatening automakers for 2006 are, in no particular order: the political climate, the "gray" market, E-VAT adjustments and the 70 percent VAT cap.

Arnel Doria, Honda Cars Philippines' deputy head for marketing, says concerned sectors such as carmakers and labor organizations must come out in support of government initiatives to curb importation of used right-hand-drive vehicles. Otherwise, he stresses, the industry should accept them and learn to live with it.

'Gray' market

Daniel Isla, Toyota Motor Philippines' first vice president for marketing, paints a more dire picture with the proliferation of the "gray" market.

Says Isla: "The gray imports from Subic, and now I heard allegedly from all over the archipelago, Cagayan, Cebu and Davao, continue to be a challenge not only to Toyota, but to the whole industry. We hope that the government will seriously address this issue soon as it affects not only the integrity of our operations but poses a threat to the jobs of the people under our employ."

He says another major issue this year would be the implementation of the 12 percent E-VAT, which, according to him, would "have a natural upward impact on prices."

Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines (Campi) president Elizabeth Lee says the major challenges in 2006 include the repeal of the 70 percent cap on input VAT—a disincentive and unnecessary prohibitive measure imposed on businesses—which would cause an increase in the cost of doing business and prices of vehicles. This, coupled with the E-VAT adjustment from 10 to 12 percent would put further pressure on already thin margins, she says.

Repeal of 70% cap

Doria says the increase in E-VAT would further push car prices away from the reach of the middle class, the potential growth area for the car industry. Unless financing packages with low interest are introduced to the buying public, the expected price increases (between P10,000 and P50,000 per unit) could stunt the growth of the industry.

He adds that the auto industry, including its dealerships, would be hit hard by the 70-percent cap on input tax since its margins are very much below 30 percent.

Several options

"Honda Cars Philippines, together with the other industry players, has proposed several options to the BIR to mitigate the deleterious effects of the cap. The ultimate remedy is the amendment of the E-VAT law, either to remove entirely the cap or revise the 70 percent cap to above 90 percent. However, this will take time," says Doria.

The industry has proposed alternatives in the form of administrative issuances or regulations that would interpret liberally the provisions of the E-VAT law.

"One proposal which should be seriously considered is the treatment of the 30 percent tax (as a result of input tax exceeding the output tax) as advanced tax payment. The subsequent excess of output tax over the input tax are then deducted from the advanced tax payment," Doria explains.

Scoop: RAV4 unveiled tonight; Galant, too

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

OF ALL THE CAR COMPANIES IN THE country today, Toyota Motor Philippines (TMP) has always been the most different in more ways than one.

For one, the motoring industry giant has been lording it over the scene for years now. Just recently, it scored another Triple Crown affair—a Grand Slam—by sweeping all record sales in three categories: passenger cars, commercial vehicles and overall sales.

For another, despite the company's huge successes all this time, it hates the habit of trumpeting them, simply allowing others to heap praise on them. I've seen the car company's humility a lot of times already—at point blank range even—through my accidental meetings, both here and abroad, with Alfred Ty, the TMP vice chair. I consider Alfred to be a supreme model of what being low-key is amid celebrity status.

* * *

"The overall sales category would include SUVs (sport utility vehicles)," said Ariel de Jesus, the dapper spokesperson of TMP. "We are humbled again by this success in 2005."

"Modesty aside, we also scored the highest market share ever in the history of TMP existence, which is 36.6 percent," said Danny "Sir John" Isla, a senior vice president of TMP.

They continually shun breast-beating and it is only through my eternal prodding that I can extract reactions from the two gentlemen, such as the above quotes.

* * *

Toyota scored the first Grand Slam in 2002, repeating the feat in 2003 and 2004, before reprising it in 2005.

One unique trait—if we can call it that—of the country's No. 1 car company is, unlike virtually all of its rivals, Toyota does not hold Christmas parties for its friends and supporters during the holidays. Through the years, it instead held what TMP fondly calls "Thanksgiving Party." Such an occasion has been set for today.

To TMP, more success! Even though Katsuaki Watanabe, president of Toyota Motor Co. of Tokyo, in his patented humility admitted during the last Tokyo Motor Show of not wanting to see Toyota No. 1 in the world, it seems apparent it is headed toward that direction this year—what with the financial woes GM and Ford are in right now. And here's a scoop for Toyota's friends and customers tonight (Jan. 25): the all-new RAV 4, a perennial bestseller, will be unveiled! Remember, you heard it first here—again.

Likewise this morning, Mitsubishi unwraps its latest Galant, which is its chief missile against Toyota's Camry and Honda's Accord.

Good luck, fellas!

* * *

Here's a letter from Rob Dix, whose two sons standing 6-foot-3 and 6-foot-1 (14 years old and 16, respectively), might yet become PBA stars as they are showing signs of greatness already.

"Dear Al,

"I was pleased to read in Full Tank the issue of dump trucks being allowed to enter the NLE and then being weighed along the expressway. These trucks pose a threat to other motorists as many of them are unsafe and most truck drivers have no idea of what safe driving is. Patrols make big business charging these overloaded trucks the way they do to unsuspecting motorists caught overspeeding by agents hiding behind trees or on top of bridges. In many countries, notices are posted very visibly to warn motorists of radar camera areas to advise motorists to slow down. Why does the widest part of NLE become 80 kph? And how is it that buses and trucks speeding down the left lane are never caught in the speed traps?"

So there. I'm sure Ping de Jesus, the NLE pillar, will do something about this.

* * *

QUOTE ME. Do justice to your heart at all times: Don't honk.

* * *

Comments to menju @pldtdsl.net

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PARTICIPANTS pose with the Yamaha Spark 135, their ride throughout the 15-day tour around Thailand. Philippine representatives Ilagan and Fajardo are fourth and third from right.

Yamaha's Spark 135 embarks on 5-nation Asean tour

By Charles E. Buban

THE CHALLENGE IS TO COVER 15000 kilometers through some of the most spectacular panoramas in five Asean countries on board Spark 135 (or the Sniper 135 as it will be christened here in the Philippines), Yamaha's latest liquid-cooled, single-cylinder, 135 cc, underbone motorbike.

Starting in Indonesia last Nov. 19 (that ended Dec. 10 and covered 4500 km), the Yamaha Pan-Asean Tour is currently in Thailand.

"That tour, which started Jan. 15 and will end in Jan. 29, is expected to cover 3248 km and will definitely test this latest Yamaha motorbike in varying weather and on-road conditions. While doing so, we also want to promote Spark 135 around as a high-performance, reliable and fashionably appealing motorbike," explained Wutdikai Wanlisut, head of the Yamaha Thailand Product Planning Division.

5 countries

The tour riders are composed of representatives from each of the five countries covered by the Yamaha Pan-Asean Tour: Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam and the Philippines.

"The ride will be long and will not only test the mettle of the Spark 135 but all the participants as well," said Manila Bulletin's Aris Ilagan who along with Zandro Fajardo, owner of Oz Racing (motorbike outfitter company), represented the Philippines in the tour's second leg.

Big expectations

According to Jose Gaspar "Boy" Albos Jr., Norkis-Yamaha's SVP for marketing, Yamaha has big expectations for the Asean region since it's the most promising and has the biggest potential for growth.

Said Albos: "This is why Yamaha is aggressively pursuing programs that build motorcycle culture in the region and the Yamaha Pan-Asean Tour is an excellent opportunity to be close to our market, build camaraderie among tour participants, and be able to experience varied culture."

In fact, the tour in Thailand also included "green campaigns" that are aimed at promoting the environment and heritage conservation.

"We hope to replicate this activity once the tour arrives here in May. Since the Philippines will also be the last leg of this five-nation tour, Norkis-Yamaha is planning to make the event the most memorable and exciting one," Albos said.

A custom of feedback

MY DRIFT

Andre Palma

CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM IS something that we all must get used to. It is easy to forget that one does not write in a thought vacuum. People, however many or few, will eventually find the motoring pages of this paper. Reactions, both violent and kind, are pretty much inevitable for any motoring rant.

Some readers have commented on the lack of a direct response channel to the author, i.e. a dedicated e-mail address or a cell phone number to pester. I used to post contact information, but it remained very empty for quite some time. When the mail did come in, the bulk was spam, selling all sorts of ideas, aides and alleviations.

Thankfully, a few did actually ask about cars. You guys know who you are. The few minutes every Wednesday you spend to digest this column is very much appreciated. The effort that some have taken to actually react is quite flattering, irregardless of tone, logic or demeanor.

Reactions

There must be an admission that reactions are a way to gauge the pulse of the motoring public. There is a wide gulf in the knowledge of readers out there. There are those who ask the simplest, yet most essential questions, and then there are those who conjecture philosophically about design, engineering and performance.

Some ideas are actually worth volumes of print in their own right; there are people out there who would be better suited to fill this space than I. Call this as a sort of encouragement.

This all seemed overwhelming until very recently. Just over a year ago, I stood on the other side of the motoring fence. The opinions of the automotive media were taken with a decent amount of salt. They served as a baseline that needed to be reconfirmed by research and actual seat time in cars.

Often my estimation differed from those printed but not because of any special skill or ability at mystical divination. It is my most fervent belief that personal discovery is what matters most. This is as human judgment is subject to personal perception and prejudice.

I ask readers to apply the same stringent standards. There is no evangelical truth about what is printed, shown or presented in the mass media. Remember that the ultimate prize in "consumer product journalism" is the sale. Though your hearts and minds are a valuable commodity, your wallet is what it's all about.

Perspective

The list of cars that have been beamed over and lambasted in the confines of this column will probably differ from those of the individual consumer. Perspective plays a large part in any critical analysis, yet it takes a certain amount of responsibility to keep everything fair and factual.

People must honestly admit what they are able to bring to the table when assessing a product—experience is a key factor. Yet the greatest issue in the formation of consumer opinion is actual, firsthand knowledge about the automobiles that they are asked to buy. Throw personal wants and needs into the picture and the situation complicates geometrically.

Research is the great equalizer in any purchase proposition. The Internet is at the forefront of raw information, the critical building block of any discerned automotive decision. The free flow of ideas is so scary that many automotive manufacturers ignore this form of media in the hopes that it will just go away.

Oases of fact

While there are terabits of useless consumer product text on the Net, most already tainted by the advertising and public relations budgets of the manufacturers, there are oases of fact in the billion or so URLs out there.

These rare occurrences are almost always enthusiast based, and are not held hostage by money. Outlets that do not join the traditional "pay for praise" bandwagon are shunned, denied access to products and eventually float, distended belly up in the industry. Logically, this is the case with most other forms of media.

So, we finally come to the synthesis of this tirade. Why must we tiptoe around the truth? The consumers are the rightful focus of the entire automotive industry; their money is what fuels all our gigs, whether manufacturer or media. Why then, do we fail to broadcast the truth about the product, whether it is flawed or fascinating? How do bilateral boycotts and petty political positioning benefit the industry? Such occurrences may be tagged as ways to shore up the holiest of the holy, our own bottom lines.

Such thinking is short term and flawed as the day will come that more consumers will be able to see beyond what's been cleared for public consumption. The honest and ugly truth about products will allow the consumer genuine freedom of choice, while many in this industry will have to look elsewhere for employment.

Auto service shop goes high-tech

LOCATED ON YAKAL STREET (NEAR Chino Roces avenue) in Makati City is one of the more advanced auto service shops in Metro Manila.

According to LA Car Accessories operator and owner Amrit Mirpuri, the shop's equipment upgrades are necessary considering the competition and today's more discerning car owners.

Says Mirpuri: "I believe only through modern facilities and experienced people can a shop provide consistent and high quality workmanship. Besides I always tell my clients, it would save them more money in long run since they won't have to come more often for repairs or replacements."

Recently, LA Car Accessories (817-8617) introduced a whole new line of state-of-the-art facilities including a fully insulated sound room to safely test (and without disturbing the neighborhood) the sound quality of audio components, car horns, car alarms and sirens.

All-weather tint room

Also, the shop now has a fully air-conditioned and all-weather tint room to ensure a dust-free environment and high-quality finish of the tint installed.

According to him, the shop also offers a laser light alignment service—the first here in the country—that ensures headlights, high-intensity discharge (HID) lamps and fog lights are safely and properly aligned.

To complete the feel inside the shop, Mirpuri even hooked with up a popular FM radio station in Los Angeles, California, that plays nonstop rock and roll hits.

Mirpuri also hinted on expanding his shop's operation by opening 10 more branches in Metro Manila and other key cities in the provinces.

Tall and taller

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

JUST AS SOME PEOPLE ARE SMARTER than others, some sport utility vehicles are taller than others. However, the tallest SUV is not necessarily the most desirable SUV since height affects the handling characteristics and stability of a vehicle. You can't zoom around corners in a tall SUV the way you would in a sports sedan. (Not that SUVs were designed to tackle hairpin turns at high speed.)

Height is a disadvantage in basement parking situations where the ceiling is low. Pipes, tubes and other utility paraphernalia hanging from the ceiling further reduce head room for motor vehicles. If you are driving a tall SUV equipped with an aftermarket roof rack, chances are that you won't be allowed to enter car park basements.

Height specs

I got interested in the height specifications of SUVs last Saturday when I had to drive to Quezon City and park in a carport that has a very low roof supported underneath by thick wood beams. Two cars were available for my use, both SUVs: a Hyundai Tucson CRDi and an Isuzu Alterra 4x4, the latter being a test-drive vehicle.

Naturally, since the Alterra is a mid-size SUV while the Tucson is a compact one, the Alterra looks taller. But just to check by how much, I looked up the Alterra's overall height specification. The Alterra is 1805 mm high compared to the Tucson's 1730 mm, or 75 mm higher. (Surprisingly, though, the Tucson is wider at 1830 mm than the Alterra's 1800 mm)

Tallest SUVs

Discovering the difference in height between the Alterra and the Tucson made me curious as to which is the tallest SUV in the compact, mid-size and full-size categories. So I leafed through the 2006 Ultimate Buyer's Guide of C! Magazine to find out.

Among the 10 compact SUVs currently in the market, the Ssangyong Korando, a three-door diesel CBU from Korea, is reported to be the tallest with a height spec of 2480 mm while the least tall (not shortest, since "shortest" can also refer to length) is the Subaru Forester at 1585 mm.

Midsize

In the midsize SUV class, the tallest at 2076 mm is the Land Rover Defender and the least tall is the Jeep Grand Cherokee at 1719 mm. The Toyota Fortuner, which appears formidably tall when viewed frontally, is really only 1850 mm in overall height. The Chevrolet Trailblazer Ext (1957 mm) is taller than the Fortuner while the Toyota Land Cruiser Prado, which does not look as tall as the Fortuner, is actually 15 mm taller.

Among the five full-size SUVs, the tallest is the Ford Expedition Eddie Bauer at 1965 mm and the least tall at 1885 mm are Chevrolet products, the Suburban and the Tahoe. However, the Chevy SUVs beat the Ford Exped in terms of length. The longest SUV in any SUV category is the Suburban (5570 mm) with the mid-size Trailblazer Ext (5278 mm) the second longest. The Exped is third longest at 5227 mm.

Extraordinary length makes parking extra difficult in tight parking slots. Try backing up a Suburban or Trailblazer into a basement or open-air parking slot and count how many times you have to turn the steering wheel to shoehorn the SUV into place without side-swiping other parked cars

Shortest

The shortest SUV in any category is the Suzuki Jimny, which measures only 3645 mm in length. Although the Jimny has a ladder frame and four-wheel-drive hardware, some people classify it as a mini subcompact car rather than a compact SUV because of its tiny size.

Meanwhile, I once told a car industry executive that I've noticed many drivers/owners of the taller, longer SUVs seem to be short, small men who want to appear bigger than they really are. He burst out laughing and exclaimed, "Am I glad I'm not short!"

* * *

3RD ROAD SAFETY CONFERENCE. The country's top transportation experts gather tomorrow at the Dusit Hotel for the 3rd Road Safety Conference organized by Automobile Association Philippines (AAP) in cooperation with Toyota Motor Philippines and the UP National Center for Transportation Studies. Representatives from the Metro Manila Development Authority, Department of Public Works and Highways, trucking, bus and jeepney associations have been invited to discuss improving the safety of arterial roads that connect Metro Manila's 14 cities and three municipalities.

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: I couldn't repair your brakes, so I made your horn louder.

* * *

E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph.

THE CAR Awards Group Inc. (Cagi) tested last weekend multipurpose vehicles (MPVs) for the 2005-06 Car of the Year (from left): Mitsubishi Grandis, Toyota Innova, Hyundai Starex GRX, Mitsubishi Adventure and Chrysler Town & Country. Not in photo is the Isuzu Crosswind Sportivo. Coty-P tests resume this weekend with the subcompact cars category.

(PHOTO BY ULYSSES ANG, MOTIONCARS.COM)

Driving on the edge of style with 2006 Porsche Boxster

WHAT TIPS THE BALANCE FROM SIMPLY steering a vehicle to driving to the edge of hip and cool? That's owning the new 2006 Porsche Boxster—a car that fulfills everyone's fantasy for sophistication and speed.

After all, nothing beats zipping through the road in a car that is the envy of all. Whether the destination is just for a quick bite or long hours of shopping, a hurried trip or a leisurely journey, the 2006 Porsche Boxster takes you there with passion and panache—very much the same way the BPI Edge and Mini Edge take its cardholders places.

For BPI Edge and Mini Edge are the 2006 Porsche Boxsters of credit cards. Both brands are the top choices of those who prefer the fast and fashionable lifestyle—those who love to go about town and out of town and attack the curves of life and the road with zeal and zest.

Superior features

The 2006 Porsche Boxster is loaded with superior features. It has a 6-cylinder, 2.7-liter liquid-cooled engine that produces 240 hp and 199 lb/ft of torque and a 5-speed manual with an optional Tiptronic auto box.

It also boasts of a seven-speaker sound system, ergonomically superior seating contours, a steering wheel that can be adjusted for both reach and rake, two-inch higher head rests, larger side windows and a higher folding top for increased survivability in the event of a rollover, a unique head airbag protection system, a bi-xenon headlamp option for night vision, a Park Assist feature for parking into tight spaces, and larger brakes, and wheels and tires for dynamic safety, among others.

And just like it, the BPI Edge and Mini-Edge are packed with privileges that young urbanites favor. Just imagine enjoying freebies and discounts from the metro's hippest dining places: Aposento, Restaurante, Il Ponticello Azzurri, Nuvo, Pepato, Cibo, Una Mas, UVA, Via Mare Oyster Bar, Di Mark's Pizzeria, Blackbeard's Seafood Island, Crustasia, The Seafood Club, Red Crab, Haiku, Zen, Embassy Cuisine, Ice Vodka Bar, Temple Bar and Restaurant.

The BPI Edge and Mini-Edge also gives cardholders access to great discounts from the coolest fashion places like Sisley, GAS Jeans, Nike Park, United Colors of Benetton, Le Mimi Salon and Dive & Trek.

They can even enjoy prepaid phone reloading and balance inquiry via SMS.

Chance to drive

But that's not all. To top it all off, the BPI Edge and Mini Edge also gives its cardholders the chance to drive the definitive dream car—the 2006 Porsche Boxster!

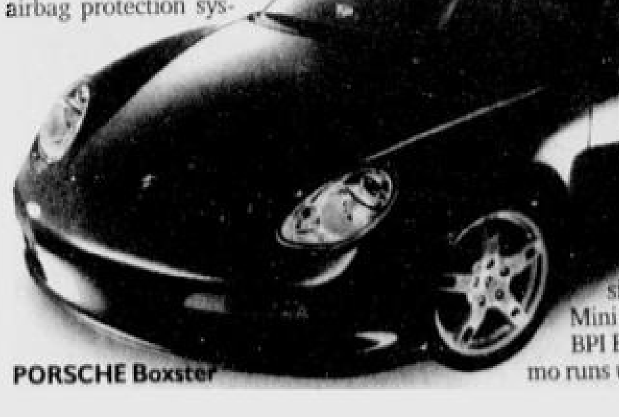
What could be cooler and hipper than that?

And getting one step closer to making it happen is just as easy as enjoying BPI Edge and Mini-Edge Card's numerous perks.

A P1,000 purchase charged to the BPI Edge or Mini Edge Card immediately earns cardholders one raffle entry. The more purchase, the more chances of winning. It's as simple as that.

Noncardholders can also have the chance to bring it home by signing up for the BPI Edge and get the Mini Edge card for free.

BPI Express Credit's "Make It Happen" promo runs until May 15.



PORSCHE Boxster

RP plans to tap $854M in ODAs

Combination of program loans, technical assistance

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY IS PLANNING TO borrow $854 million worth of official development assistance (ODA) from foreign creditors this year to finance projects and programs that cannot be covered by the expected revenue collection.

ODAs are usually provided by multilateral agencies—such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank—and bilateral institutions like the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) and foreign governments.

JBIC is the Philippines' biggest ODA source.

Data from the Department of Finance showed that the $854 million programmed ODA borrowing for this year (or P221.4 billion using the government's foreign exchange assumption of P56:$1) will be about 9 percent lower than the $937 million borrowed in 2005. The drop in the requirement was attributed to the country's improving fiscal position. The government expects its budget deficit to decline to only P125 billion this year from the P146.5 billion in 2005.

Of the $854 million, $604 million is expected to come in the form of project loans mostly for infrastructure projects, while the remaining $250 million may come in the form of program loans, or technical assistance.

Finance Undersecretary Roberto Tan earlier said the country's finance officials were set to meet with JBIC representatives in March to discuss the bank's ODA program for the Philippines for this year.

Among the projects to be proposed by the government for funding by JBIC are the Cebu South Coastal Road, the Environmental Development Project and the Infrastructure Logistics Assistance Facility.

The government wants the ODA for the Environmental Development Project and the Infrastructure Assistance Facility to come in the form of credit facilities. This means the amount of loans would be coursed through a government financial institution that will, in turn, lend out to private and public sector entities that will undertake infrastructure and environment-related projects.

Projects proposed for financing under the Environment Development Project include those related with sewarage-system enhancements and solid-waste management, Tan said.

In the meantime, the government is planning to sell this year $3.1 billion worth of RP bonds to help plug the deficit and pay maturing obligations.

Last Jan. 5, the Philippines sold $2.2 billion worth of dollar- and euro-denominated bonds in the international market. This means the government needs to raise only $900 million more from foreign commercial sources.

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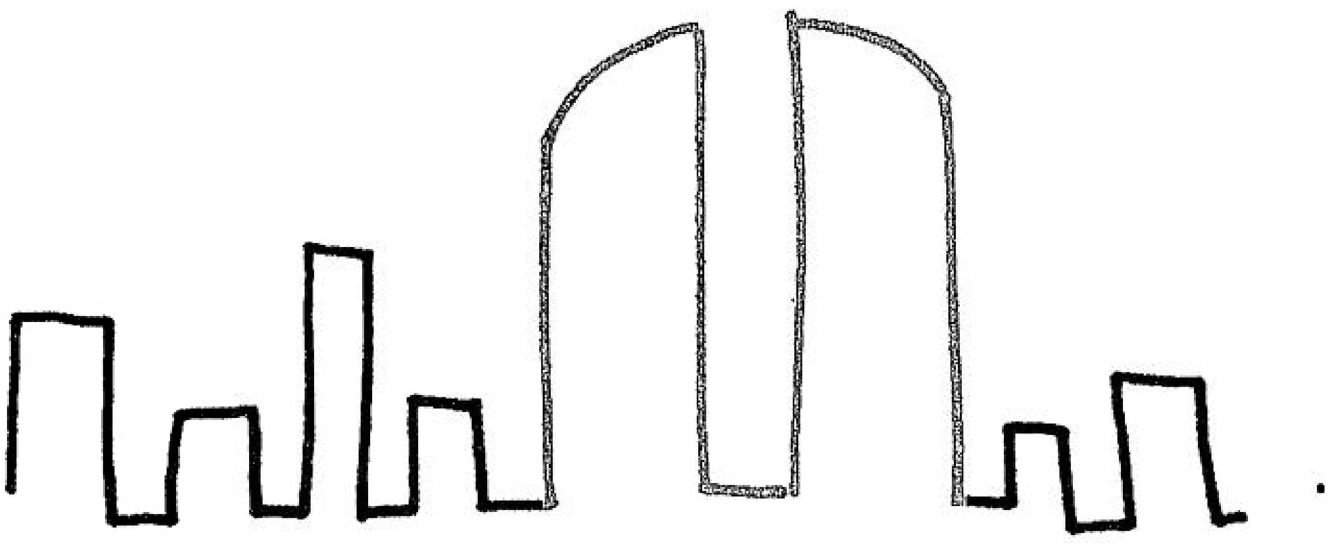

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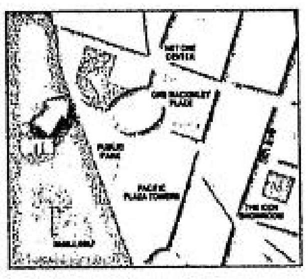

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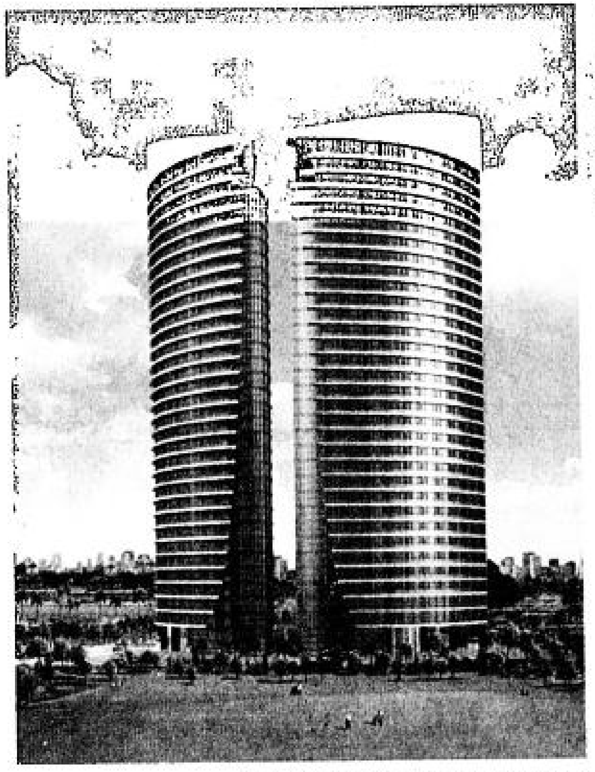

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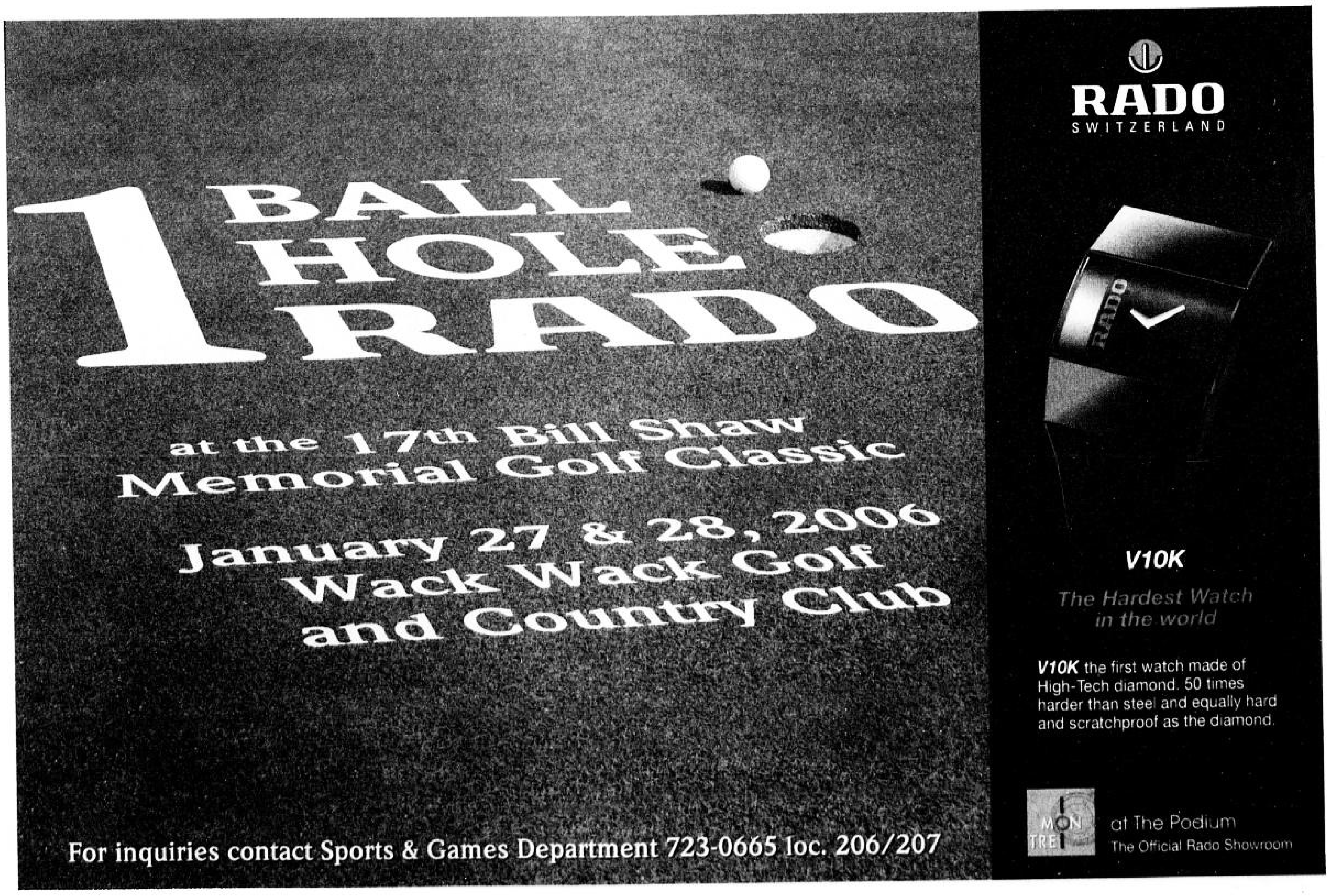

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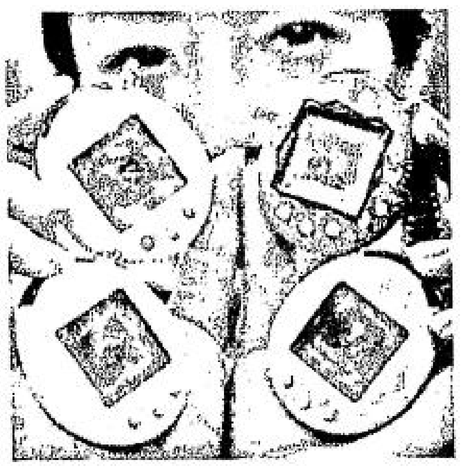
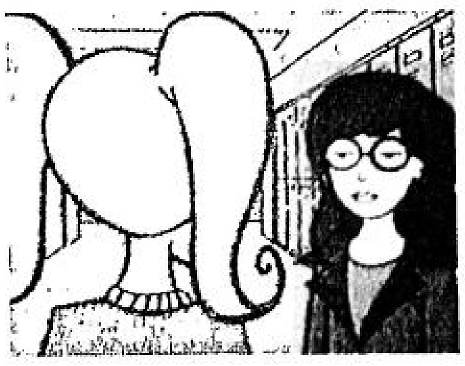
BACK TO THE '90S

This week, 2bU! looks back at our generation's good old days—the '90s.

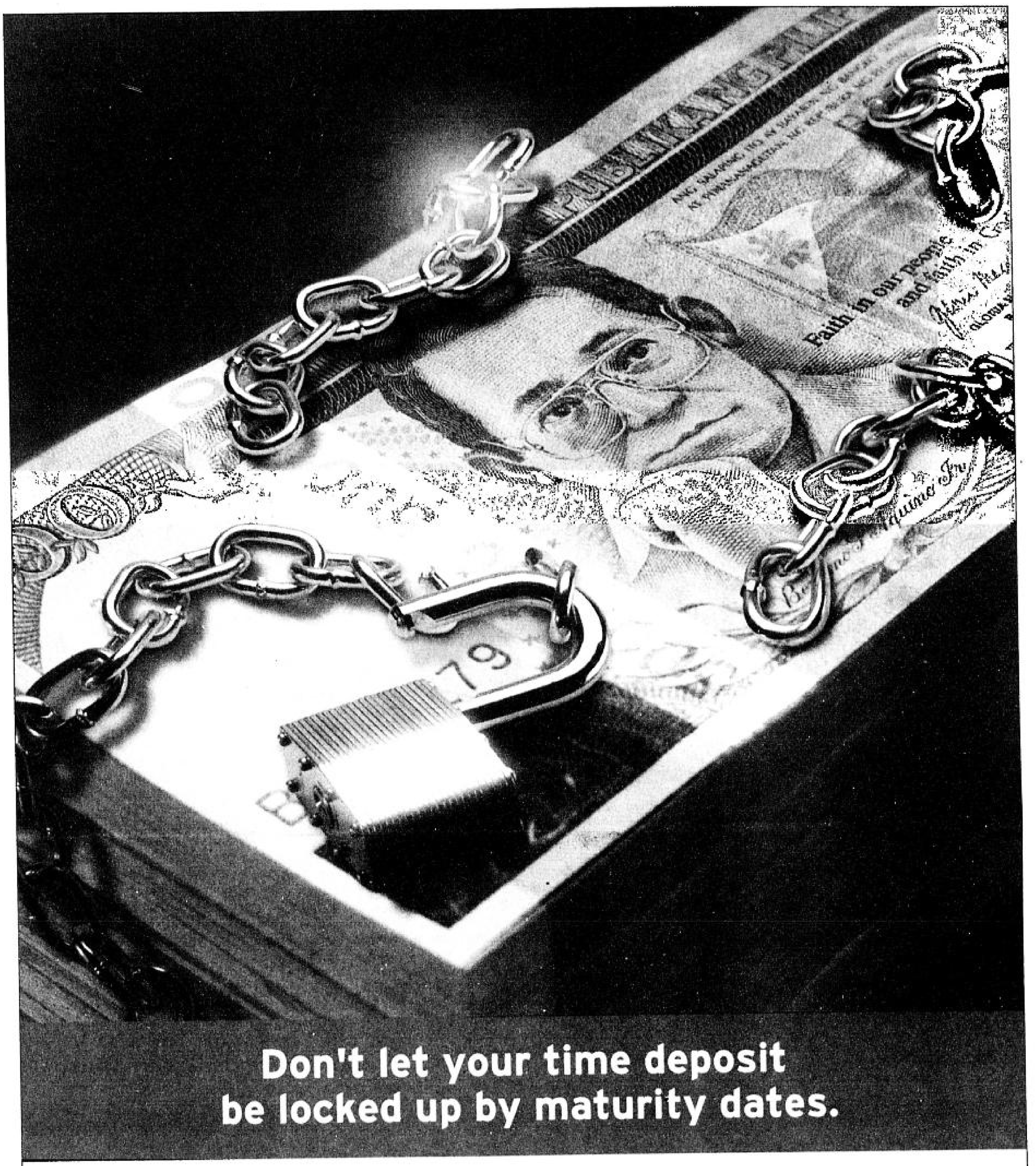
We remember the events, the cartoons, the TV hits, the cheap thrills and other favorites that made the '90s the great decade that it was. Next week, we'll do even more remembering—with the music, the fashion and the memories that rocked that decade.



Doc Martens. Tamagochi. Grunge. Alanis Morissette. Neoprints. Dawson's Creek. Beavis and Butthead. Lisa Frank. The Eraserheads.



Who and what rocked your 1990s? E-mail us at Ls_2bu@inquirer.com.ph.



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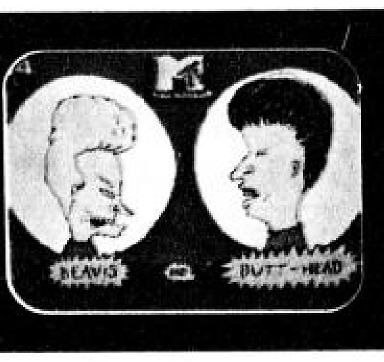
Toons of our teen years

Here's a long list of shows we all love (and miss!) up to this day



By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

KIDDIE SHOWS during the '80s were pure fun. They were all about bright colors, super-entertaining fight scenes, cool weapons and catchy theme songs.

When the '90s arrived, cartoons started to become more intelligent with all their interesting plots and witty, quotable lines—all directed to young viewers.

Bring out your hankies and get ready to do some serious reminiscing. Here's a long list of shows we all love (and miss!) up to this day.

"Beavis and Butthead"—Parents might have loathed them, but the delinquent duo and their 30-minute show on MTV won a lot of young viewers (especially males) who appreciated sarcasm and witty music video comments. Who could ever forget Butthead's laugh (or was that Beavis?)? The show was so successful it expanded into merchandise, a music album (remember "I Got You Babe" with Cher?) and even a film.

"Captain Planet and the Planeteers 1990"—Who could ever forget the blue-skinned Captain Planet who came out of nowhere once the Planeteers extended their ringed fingers and shouted: Earth, Fire, Wind, Water, Heart!?

Armed with a catchy theme song, a UN gathering of environmentally concerned teeners and some interesting villains in neon, this show was a huge success with kids and teens during the early '90s. Stars who lent voices to the show included Whoopi Goldberg as Gaia, Meg Ryan as Dr. Blight, Jeff Goldblum as Verminous Skumm and Sting as Alien Zarm.

"Dexter's Laboratory"—Why do we love Dexter? Because he's a cute Lilliputian redhead whose melodramatic lines (in a weird accent!) cracked us no end. Oh, his inventions, as well as his sister Deedee, were adorable, too.

"Daria"—She may have had her own world, but her universe also became ours because we totally related to her. Who didn't, when she was an outcast at school, she had a popular and cute sister and the people around her were just like people around us?

"Johnny Bravo"—Most famous for his signature black shirt, bulging biceps, up-there ego and the coifed pompadour, Johnny thought he was God's gift to women. It's just that the women didn't agree, and this was what made the show really hilarious. And Johnny's wonderful one-liners, of course.

"Migraine Boy"—Yet another animated gem from MTV, this sweet and short suddenly-on-the-screen spot featured the adventures of a little boy who suffered from constant headache. He had a dog named Tylenol.

"Mister Bogus"—What's yellow, funny, trouble-prone and just a foot-high? Mister Bogus! He was the good-hearted gremlin-slash-master of disguise who tried his best to help around the house, but just ended up making things chaotic for everyone. Best part of the show? The claymation bits that were sometimes funnier than the cartoons.

"MTV's Celebrity Deathmatch"—Sure, celebrity catfights are entertaining, but not as entertaining as this show, where we saw celebs battle it out with competition, or whoever was available. Pretty

---

Boob-tube trailblaz

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

WE MIGHT HAVE been very busy with school during the '90s, but that didn't stop us from grabbing the remote and straining our eyes to get as much TV booty as we could.

Most of these gems may have ended when the '90s waved goodbye, but they'd always be on the TV screens of our mind.

"All That"—A very entertaining and funny show teeming with talented kids, "All That" opened doors for its stars including Kenan Thompson, Kel Mitchell and Amanda Bynes. It was so hilarious it made me sad thinking how we couldn't come up with something as funny over here.

"Ally McBeal"—The dramedy series about a lawyer with super short skirts might have sadly ended, but it left a legacy to all its loyal viewers. It made iconic (and normal) several things: hallucinations, that crazy dancing baby in diapers, publicly dancing to no music and hearing things. Oh, how we miss all of Ally's officemates!

"Are You Afraid of the Dark?"—What could be better than spooky stories every Friday night? This show was all about a group called The Midnight Society, the members of which met up and took turns telling scary stories. Well, they didn't really bring out the goose bumps, but we realized that only when we were already grown up.

"Baywatch"—How to have a hit show? Just fill every minute of an hour with sexy bodies in bathing suits! That's what the show did, and it worked for them. The series about lifeguards patrolling California's beaches introduced us to the droolworthy bods of Pamela Anderson, David Charvet and Carmen Electra, among others. Just three reasons why we watched the show, and why we remember it.

"Beverly Hills 90210"—The inspiration behind many Pinoy teen series like "TGIS" and "Click," the hugely successful show covered a lot of teen issues like virginity, friendship, romance, personal crises and even drug addiction. Although it was all about a group of hip teens in Beverly Hills (where else?), many teenagers from the Philippines were able to relate to the show and its characters.

"Buffy the Vampire Slayer"—A spin-off of the popular movie with the same title, the TV series got a larger cult following. Serious, deep and addicting, the science-fiction, action/adventure show made sure it also touched on teen issues, even homosexuality.

"California Dreams"—This semi-forgettable teen series—all about a band called The California Dreams—was just like any other show, but it had a very nice theme song sung by the band members themselves.

"Charmed"—Thanks to the show, everybody wanted to have magical powers and be a witch (or a warlock) just like Prue, Piper and Phoebe, collectively known as the Charmed Ones. When Shannen Doherty got booted out of the show, her Prue character died and was replaced by Paige (Rose McGowan). The show gained even more loyal viewers while the sisters continued vanquishing evil.

"Clueless"—Based on the hit movie with the same name, the show was all about the teenage years of rich girl Cher Horowitz of Beverly Hills. Without her mother around, she journeys through school and teen life along with her dad and very fashionable friends. Amber, a great source of quotable quotes, was one very memorable character. Most of us couldn't relate to their shallow concerns (it's a rich girl thing), but we undoubtedly enjoyed watching how the rich did their thing.

"Dawson's Creek"—This teen-oriented show focused on the lives of four friends—Dawson, Joey, Pacey and Jen—and their coming-of-age story as they experienced love, sex and family problems. The show made its stars big ones, and its theme song a huge hit.

"Friends"—Half an hour, six friends, billions of fans. Enough said. We miss it, but reruns are still on at Star World.

"Melrose Place"—Although most of us were a little too young for this adult version of "Beverly Hills 90210" (everyone did everyone, for crying out loud!), its idiosyncratic characters, impossible plots and very attractive stars made it hard for us to just let it pass.

"My So-Called Life"—Manila may hate Claire Danes, but we loved her back when she was the angsty Angela Chase whom we could relate to. The show had a loyal following, even if it lasted for only one season.

"Sabrina, the Teenage Witch"—Yet another series with some magic on it, the show charmed a lot of
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Commercial SUCCESS

Take a trip down memory l
unforgettably tacky comm

By Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent

WHILE CABLE TELEVISION has its merits (there are hardly any commercials), it also has its shortcomings (there are hardly any commercials.) It may be a relief not to see the same shampoo ad three times in a row, but by missing out on the latest marketing gimmicks, we miss out on one of the defining points of pop culture as well.

I grew up watching quite a lot of shows on local television in the late '80s and the '90s, with ABS-CBN being my station of choice; it was also the station that my grandfather patronized. On lazy summer days, when we got tired of chasing the dogs around the backyard, we would settle in to watch our favorite shows—"Home Along da Riles" and "Maalaala Mo Kaya" for my *lolo* (though I did catch him watching "Connie Reyes on Camera" and "Lovingly Yours" a couple of times), and "Sara, ang Munting Prinsesa" for me.

I also watched the pre-teen show, "Ang TV." As long as it was "4:30 *na*, 'Ang TV' na!," I dropped everything to watch Antoinette Taus, Paolo Contis and company crack corny jokes with exaggerated gestures and facial expressions. However, despite the whole "*esmyuskee*" phenomenon, I find it difficult to remember anything about that show now. But I do remember the commercials that were shown in between the gags.

We watched an insane amount of commercials! Since there weren't that many channels then, my sisters and I didn't switch even when long, boring ones came on. We patiently sat and waited for the show to resume, which would be interrupted by yet another string of ads after five minutes. The ads were repetitive, and some were just plain ridiculous—but they stuck. And now, maybe 10 years after I first watched those ads, they still pop up in my head.

The commercials came equipped with cheesy lines and catchy jingles. Some lasted, like the Mentos "Fresh goes better" series—the number of situations you can readily fix with a Mentos Fresh Mint is steadily increasing—but most have gone to the Great Advertising Junkyard in the Sky because they have become embarrassingly passé to the public.

Nano what?

Does anyone remember the jingle for Nano Nano candy? You know, sweet, sour and salty—"Nano Nano, Nano Nano, Nano Nano!" It was insanely repetitive, but it worked. The kids in my school were singing that song for weeks, and I'm sure the sales of that candy shot through the roof. But after a while, the candy (and the commercial) simply disappeared from the scene. Not for Nips, though. Although the song that asked you if you "wanna see what happens in a bag of Nips" didn't make it to the new millennium, the chocolate stayed around, at least.

Songs from the commercials defined the lifestyle of the early '90s. We had the whole rainbow of them, from Anchor milk, whose executives believed that children are the future, to Coke, whose head honchos wanted to teach the world to sing. "Sabado Nights" called for San Miguel beer, and Ruffa Gutierrez's mermaid singing "Kumukutikutitap" put me off Happee toothpaste forever, right up there with Beam, Family, and their accursed jingles.

But the award for the Most Annoying Toothpaste Commercial jingle had to go to ZAA Nature's Touch Tawas. The ad featured two twins singing to each other (with matching dance steps) after they had healed their mouth sores with the incredible magic of the toothpaste. I still know the lines by heart to this very day, and I will never forgive ZAA Nature's Touch Tawas for that. The song goes:

"ZAA Nature's Touch Tawas
Laban sa singaw toothpaste!
Tanggal ang singaw mo,
safe pa ang ngipin mo!"

The sad thing about the whole affair is that my mom actually bought the toothpaste after seeing the commercial.

Annoying ads

Despite the merciful abolition of that ad, not all annoying jingles are lost to the world—if you remember laughing at the Caronia and Caress nail polish ads decades ago, then all you need to do is to surf to RPN 9 and IBC 13 to take a trip down memory lane, where you can still "color every magic moment" with Caress and sing Caronia's incomprehensible theme song—sadly, without "Tropang Trumpo's" "*chee-ken!*" at the end of it.

On the same channels, you will also find the Family Rubbing Alcohol referee with his precious Isopropyl that is "*'Di lang pampamilya, pang i-sports pa!*" And just until recently, when it became easier to buy pirated DVDs than to rent videos, RA Home Vision terrified kids with its ad of a dark hand reaching out to viewers with a stodgy voice promoting "videocassette tapes of award-winning shows, sports, cartoons and more!" while showing clips of "Cleopatra" alternated with "The Smurfs."

The overall style of television commercials has changed greatly since I was a kid. Now, Whisper girls are perky and decked out in brightly colored clothes. Ten years ago, they blended into the black background in spandex suits and shared the secret of their leak-free existence in, well, a whisper.

Our generation was defined by sound bites from those commercials—they were quoted, spoofed, and integrated into our everyday lives. (How many times have you been asked to pass the "ketchup please, Luis?") You were supposed to pipe up with the rejoinder whenever someone mentioned a line from a particular ad. "*Sino* best friend *mo doon?*" was answered with "*Siyempre ikaw lang!*"

Even to this day, whenever people my age say something that begins with "Dear Diary," someone will inevitably continue, "Carlo sat beside me today..."

That boy

I could never forget that commercial of a girl who chose hotdogs over her biggest crush. Of course, for several weeks, whenever I bit into a Tender Juicy Purefoods hotdog, I felt like the girl made the right decision. It was an entirely different thing, of course, when the sequel came out and heartthrob Patrick Garcia turned out to be "Carlo."

There were always happy families in the commercials. Families went to Jollibee together and flew kites on weekends. A typical commercial family consisted of loving mom and dad, doting *ate* or *kuya*, and adorable little brother or sister who all ended up hugging each other and beaming at the camera during the last frame of the ad. Dysfunctional? It didn't happen—not in commercials, anyway.

Some ads reminded me of my family, like the Bear Brand (or was it Milkmaid?) commercial that showed a little girl dancing with her grandfather. "Is that you, *lolo*?" she wondered out loud. "Look at my mole," he said, and she was convinced, never questioning him again on the basis of a mole.

We also saw an innocent Vandolph bonding with Dolphy on a camping trip by the beach. "'*Tay, ulitin natin ito*," he murmured before dropping off to sleep, belly full of hotdogs. If all families were like the ones we saw on TV—with moms equipped with Safeguard consciences—then there'd be world peace for all.

Things seemed so uncomplicated and easy in commercials; even *telenovelas* were more credible compared to those 30-second
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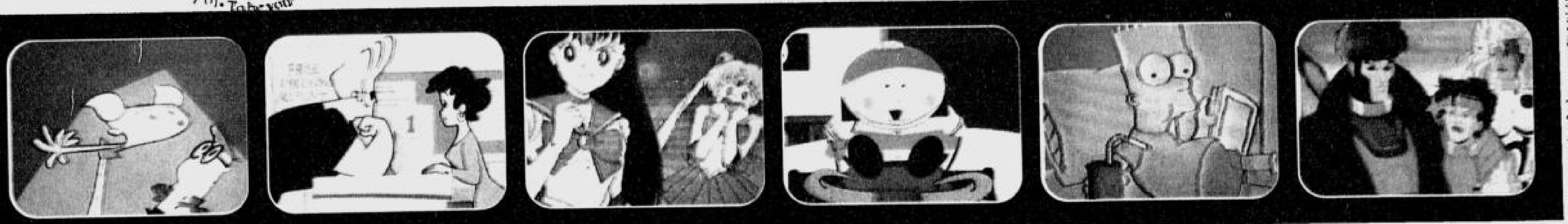

gruesome and graphic, the claymation show was deemed too violent by parents, but proved to be a fun-watch for a lot of MTV viewers.

"Power Rangers"—Friday nights were much cooler because of Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers. We all wanted to be one of the five easy-to-the-eyes teens who morphed into warriors and protected the world from the forces of space witch Rita Repulsa.

"Sailor Moon"—Channel 5 dubbed the show in Filipino and turned off a lot of *pa-sosyal* kiddies, but that didn't stop the show from winning loyal viewers. The big-eyed Japanese schoolgirls (in uniform!) who suddenly transformed into superheroines made sure viewers would not channel-surf when they were on.

"South Park"—Although animated, this show was intended for adult viewers. Oh, and how adults loved it and its foul language and adult content. Never mind if the animation was so simple. The fact that the characters puked and acted out their horniness made everyone stay glued.

"Teletubbies"—We may not have religiously followed it, but we saw at least an episode and wondered what kind of creatures Tinky-Winky, Dipsy, Laa-Laa and Po were. And while we didn't really get to ascertain whether Tinky-Winky was gay, the show made a lot of kids shut up and behave even for just a couple of minutes.

"The Powerpuff Girls"—Blossom, Buttercup and Bubbles were a big hit with the kids who had a hard time figuring out who they wanted to be among the three big-eyed and big-headed super-powered girls. We teeners just sat back, relaxed and enjoyed the funny action scenes and campy lines.

"The Simpsons"—Probably the most-loved cartoon series ever (and most iconic!), the show introduced a bunch of characters who are all like family to us now. It's amazing how lines like "dope" or "eat my shorts" or even the sound of a pacifier being sucked on instantly brings the show to mind.

"Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles"—The show was an instant hit with the boys, with all the cool fight scenes and weapons. Everyone went gaga when Rafael, Donatello, Michaelangelo and Leonardo (all pizza lovers!) became available as action figures (and the ooze!) in the market.

"Tiny Toon Adventures"—What made the show a big hit with the viewers was how the characters weren't just kiddie versions of the originals. They had their own unique personalities. And thanks to witty lines and interesting plots, even adults loved the show. The cartoon's most memorable character was probably Elmyra, the too affectionate and aggressive girl who had a tendency to hug all the animals on the show.

"X-Men: The Animated Series"—Based on the popular Marvel comic book of the same name, the X-Men cartoon wasn't just all about superpowers and kicking butt. Its main characters—a group of mutant teenagers—struck a chord with the viewers, because they were all social outcasts. Of course, all the fight scenes were wonderful, too! Do you remember rushing home just to catch it?

All pictures from www.toonarific.com

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carried the show in our shores. Parker—along with his fashionable shirts and frozen yogurt with gummi bears—was just irresistible. I wonder why the show didn't turn out to be as iconic.

"Party of Five"—Five siblings, five different stories. The show was all about how eldest child Charlie had to take care of the rest of his sibs after their parents died in a car crash. Left with a restaurant they needed to manage, the Salinger family members stuck with each other and went through life together. Awww.

"The X-Files"—It's easy to go crazy over the show. It did not only tackle several interesting topics like genetic mutants, killer insects and, of course, aliens, there was also a romantic angle between FBI agents Fox Mulder and Dana Scully! This was what probably kept viewers hooked.

Photos from www.tv.com

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was sweet, sharp, soft, chewy, fruity, or sweet? Did the kid who cried "mommy" when he saw the Magnolia ice cream man have a daddy? Why did 7-Up drop Fido Dido for forgettable human models? How many people have attempted to take the Nestea plunge?

Commercials will never be glorified in the same way as movies and television shows, because many of them are sniffed at as profit-driven vehicles. And since most of them have rather short shelf lives, they are forever banished to obscurity after a few months or even weeks.

But you cannot deny that these commercials, no matter how detached from reality they initially seem to be, reflect the consciousness of a generation at a particular period; they reflect the things people at a particular time valued most—and for the most part, the things that are valued now are the same things that were valued before, although they were presented differently—you don't get as many jingles now, for one thing.

Although commercials now are more sophisticated than they were back in the '80s and '90s, they also show that things haven't really changed much since then. We still want better things than what we presently have, and commercials show us a world where things are perfect—and we, the gullible consumers and dreamers, will always be willing to go along for the ride.

E-mail the author at biancaconsunji@yahoo.com

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Those unforgettable thingamajigs

By Javier Mata
2bU! Correspondent

IF YOU ARE READING this section I am assuming two things: You lived through the '90s and you were a kid back then. Back then we didn't have fancy electronic toys and "hip" dolls and action figures like the kids of today now have. Being a kid back then was simpler... and I dare say more enjoyable. For those of you who spent their adolescent days in the simple '90s, here is a trip down memory lane.

Tamagotchi

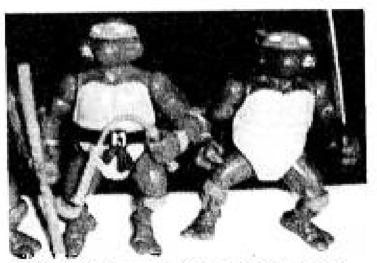
The virtual pet was a simple idea that spawned an almost irrational craze (and a "hit" song).

Instead of getting a real pet with all of the messiness that entails, why not get a simulated one? Almost the same responsibilities, a virtual "life," but none of the heartaches of mortality.

These egg-shaped gadgets were everywhere and the sight of friends and strangers checking up on their virtual pets to "nurture" them was... amusing.

Some would argue that the devices were not the same as taking care of real pets, but to the kids who didn't have the time or resources to take care of a real pet, these little things were a godsend (and not a few of them grew attached to the little creatures on the screen).

Even today the concept of virtual pet remains—after all, Tamagotchi was in no small way responsible for the creation of Pokemon, Digimon and other "pet" games.



HEROES in a half shell (above); and the colorful world of Lisa Frank (below)

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

In the '80s, no self-respecting boy could do without a G.I. Joe action figure. In the '90s these proud soldiers of America found themselves replaced by four mutated turtles who lived in the sewers.

What started out as a comic creation spawned a hit cartoon series, a handful of movies... and dozens of toys action figures that ranged from the ninja turtles with their standard weapons to vehicles that had sophisticated weaponry like spring-loaded projectiles and green "sewer goo" that could be lobbed at unsuspecting toys.

Leonardo, Michaelangelo, Donatello and Raphael soon became household names. It was *the* toy craze of the '90s.

Today, if us old boys took the time to watch the Cartoon Network, we would see that the franchise is having a revival of sorts and TMNT toys are popping up again... we can just grin and think to ourselves that we got those toys long before you young 'uns have.

Lisa Frank

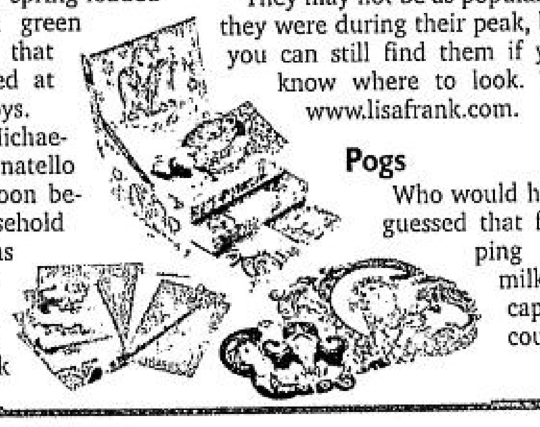
If sewer ninja turtles were the must-have of the youth male demographic, then these rainbow-colored, mascot-inspired products ranging from stationary products to fashion, overwhelmed the girls.

Undeniably feminine in nature and psychedelically colorful, these pencils/notebooks/plush backpacks could be found in every desk of every classroom in every all-girl school.

The product line was also largely responsible for making some things "girly," such as unicorns and pandas.

Of course, being the male chauvinist pig of a writer that I am, I could never understand why they were so sought-after. But I still remember how my cousin would light up after getting one of these.

They may not be as popular as they were during their peak, but you can still find them if you know where to look. Try www.lisafrank.com.

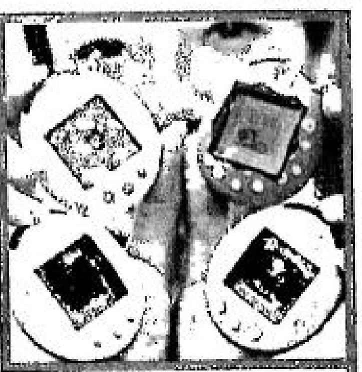


Pogs

Who would have guessed that flipping milk-caps could be so much fun? Named after a fruit juice whose caps were originally used to play it, the game became so popular that hundreds of pog milkcaps were designed and collecting them became just as fun as actually playing it.

Even Coca-cola had a pog mascot and it became one of its most successful marketing campaigns.

Today, pogs are hardly seen. You can still find them in niche stores and eBay as a blissful reminder of the days when we didn't need CG graphics to keep us happy.



TAMAGOTCHI

Neoprint

Taking your picture in those little booths has always been fun, but these machines from Korea showed us how turning them into stickers was even more fun. They peppered every mall, and the sight of high school and elementary youths hogging them became commonplace, and everything from notebooks to plastic file cases was covered in pictures of faces squeezed in a few inches.

With the advent of digital cameras and cell phones with them, Neoprint has faded into fad heaven, but they will forever be known as the symbol of friendships formed and kept in the '90s.

HAW Flakes

Cheap young thrills

By Marla Miniano
2bU! Correspondent

What do Texas, Bazooka and Big Boy have in common? They were our sinful pleasures in the innocent past

BEFORE LAY'S AND HERshey's invaded the Philippine junk-food industry, children of the '90s happily munched away on their friendly neighborhood *sari-sari* store's treasures: candies and chocolate bars, crackers and chips, biscuits and bubble gum. There were corn snacks with little trinkets inside, cookies with colorful icing, and popsicles you had to share with a friend. And the best part of experiencing the junk food rush was this: for P20 or less, you were guaranteed to have a feast between your sticky fingertips.

Texas, Bazooka and Big Boy bubble gum. We loved Texas because it was softer than the other brands, and it stayed sweet for a long time, and we loved Bazooka for the comic strips inside the wrapper. But we loved Big Boy the best because, really, who can ever forget that commercial? All together now, "Big big gum, for big big bubbles!"

Cheezels and Chickadees. They didn't really taste any different from the usual corn snacks, but they won our hearts because they had toys inside: temporary tattoos and those icky things that would grow when you submerged them in water. They also had the Hop 'n' Pop, which, according to one of my friends "was a disaster waiting to happen because it looked like something grownups use; something little kids should know absolutely nothing about."

Pritos Ring. The fun was in putting one ring on each finger before eating them up. The fun stopped when you accidentally bit yourself and ended up bawling your lungs out.

White Rabbit and Joy, aka the whistle candy. Simply because the idea of edible paper and candy that creates noise appeals to children of all ages.

Iced Gem Biscuits. The cookie part tastes like Marie biscuits, and the icing part tastes like the candy flowers in our birthday cakes. The different colors of the icing were a definite plus.

Tivoli and Coney Island ice cream. Tivoli's Funwich gave us sticky fingers and chocolate stains on our white uniforms, but since it was incredibly yummy, we didn't care about the mess (or, at least, not until our mothers started scolding us). We miss Coney Island's pistachio and bubble gum-flavored ice cream.

Nips. Smarties were "cooler" than Nips because they came in tubes, but we loved the latter because they made a rainbow (chocolate Nips), a choco rainbow—and they colored all the flowers, and painted the trees, too. These tiny candy-covered chocolates were such a big part of our life that they even became an acronym for something else: Not In Proper Seat.

Snacku. We were such good little boys and girls back then. See? We ate our veggies without putting up a fight.

Haw Flakes. Because we were still too young to take Communion, we got someone to play the priest and lined up in front of him so we could stick out our tongues and receive our Haw Flakes. And, surprise surprise, they actually tasted like bread and wine!

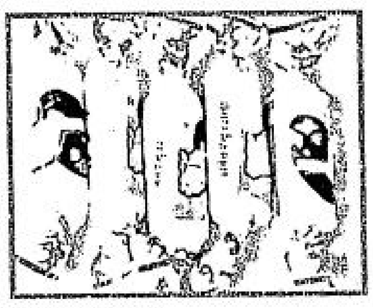
Brown Cow and Horlicks. Before Hershey's, there was Brown Cow. Before Ovaltine and Ovalteenies, there were Horlicks and Horlicks Malties. We miss getting our chocolate fix from these oldies-but-goodies.

Fanta softdrinks. We insisted on drinking nothing else, but these, refusing to acknowledge that the orange one tasted exactly like Royal Tru-Orange and the lemon one tasted exactly like Mountain Dew.

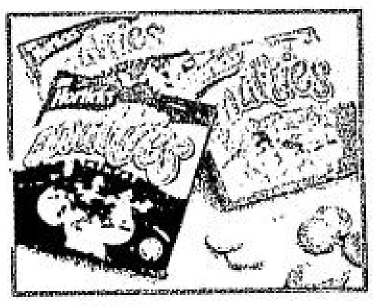
Nano-Nano. The jingle says it all.

So. Paging all junk-food manufacturers! Spare us from overpriced potato chips and overrated ice cream, please. If we plan to adapt an unhealthy lifestyle by bingeing on food with zero nutritional value, we don't want to splurge. The way we see it, we want neither our stomachs nor our wallets to be empty. In our world, these cheap thrills will always rule. Always.

E-mail the author at muyacaramella@yahoo.com



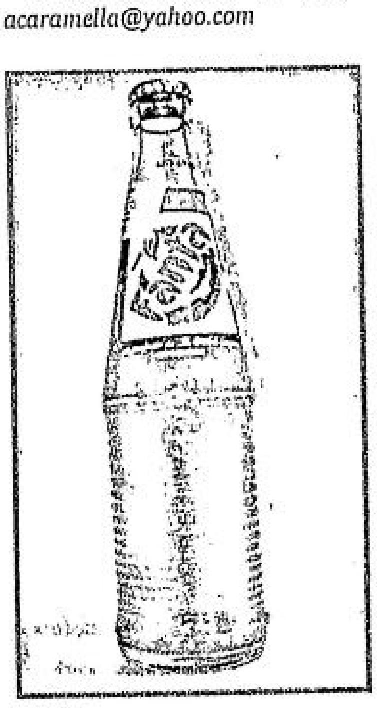
WHITE Rabbit



HORLICKS

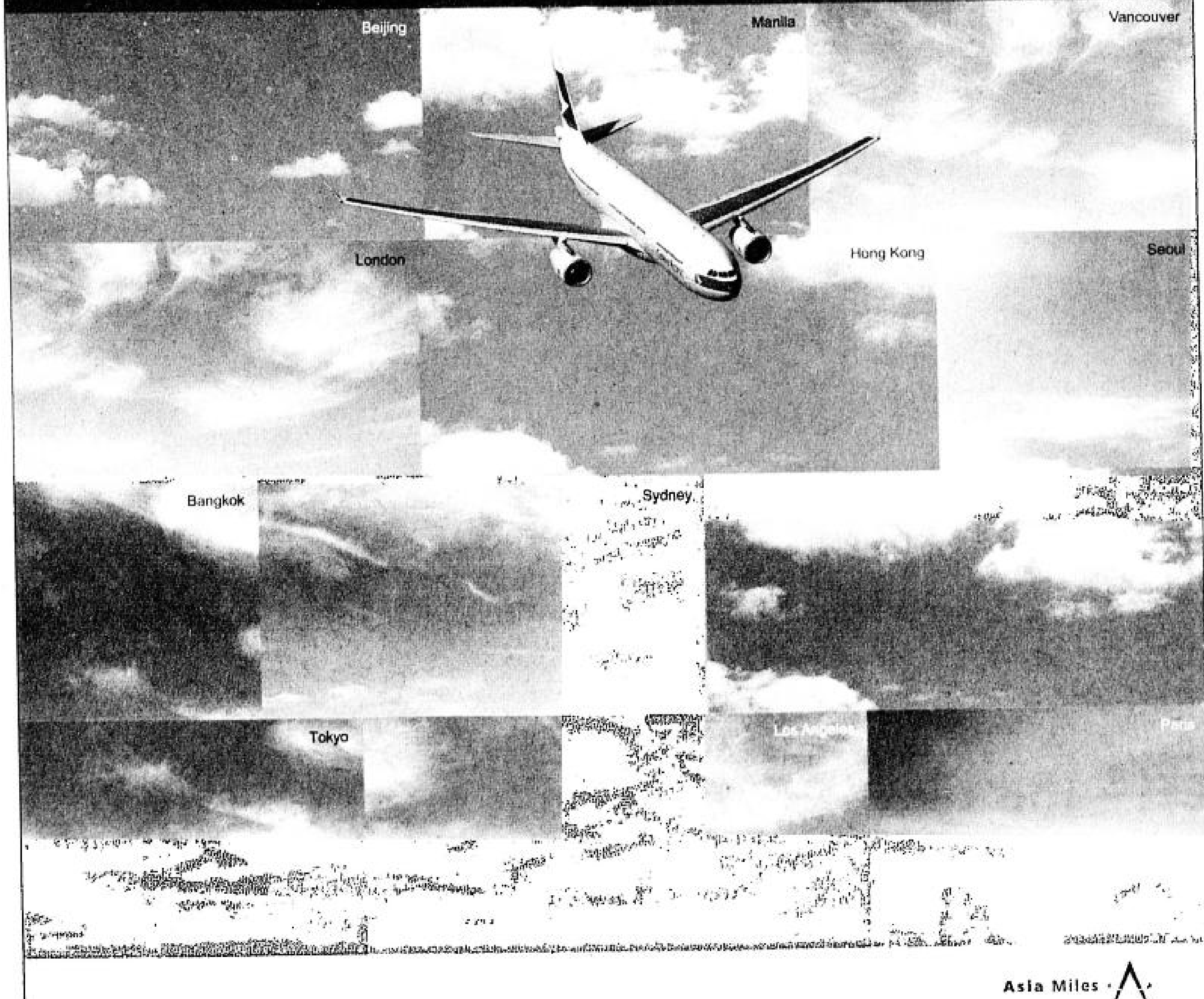
Fun in every bite!

ICED Gems



FANTA

Move farther into a bigger world.
Cathay Pacific moves you to over 90 destinations worldwide.



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DOLLY, the cloned sheep

Events that shaped the '90s

Who would have thought a sheep named Dolly would alter the course of science?

By Gmeleen Faye B. Tomboc
2bU! Correspondent

IN THE '90S, while kids fiddled with Tamagotchis or went around the block in rollerblades, adults and teens were glued to the television watching events unfold.

Some of these would alter the course of history; some would end up mere fodder for gossip. But for better or for worse, they changed the world as we knew it.

1990

Ten- to 12-hour brownouts. Who could forget the blackouts that rudely interrupted episodes of "Anna Luna?" Every household in the Philippines snapped up

EVENTS/ D3

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2006

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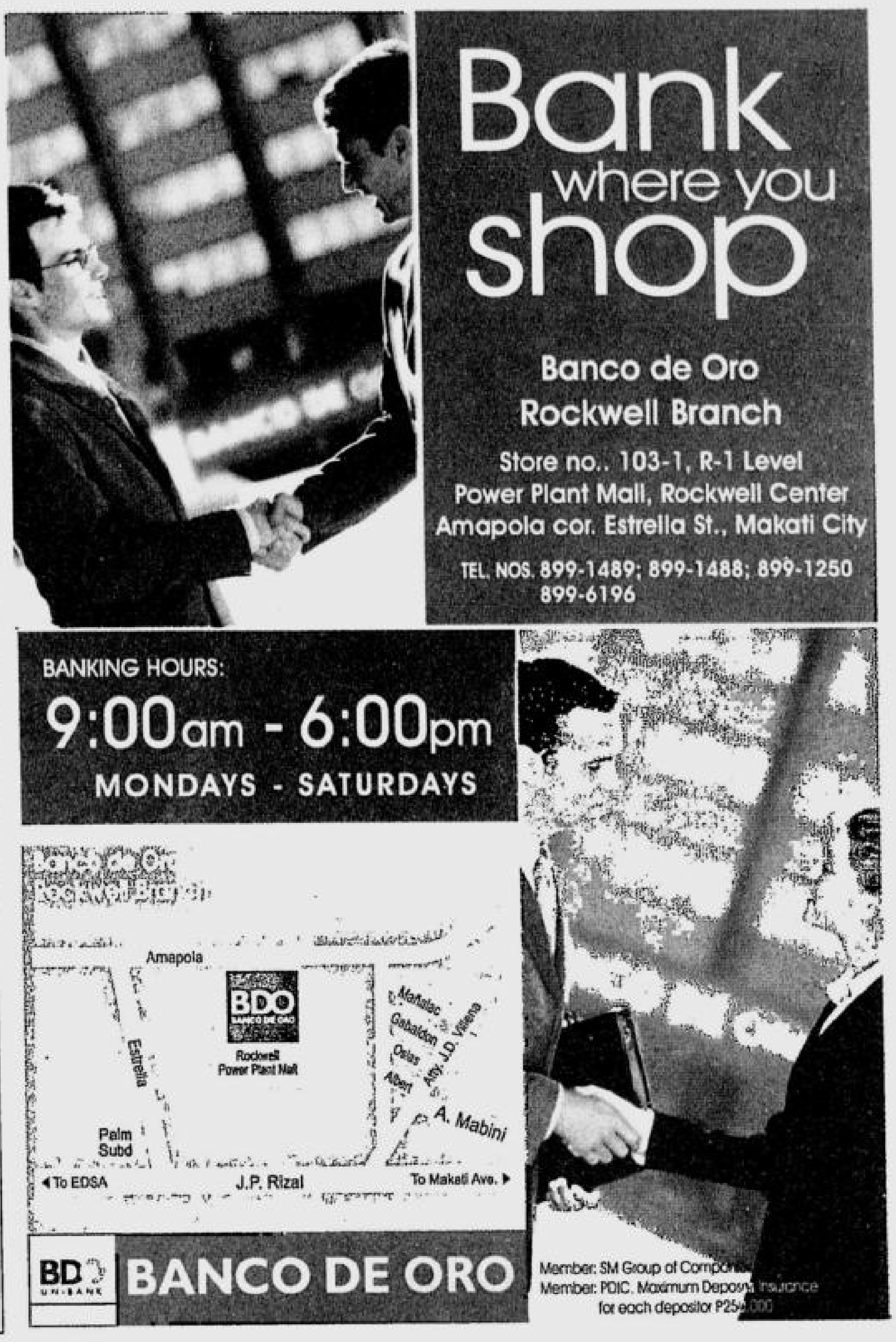

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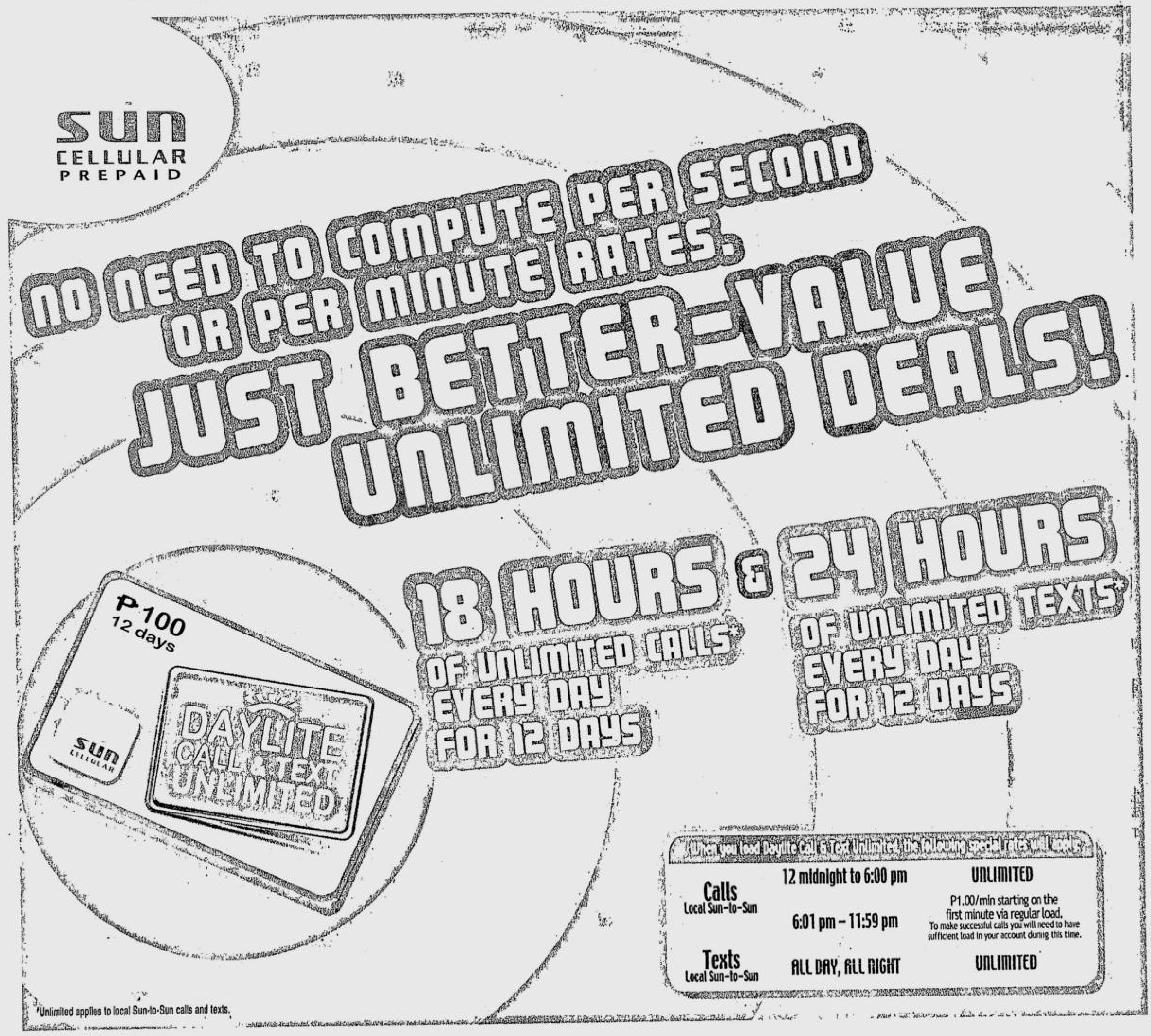

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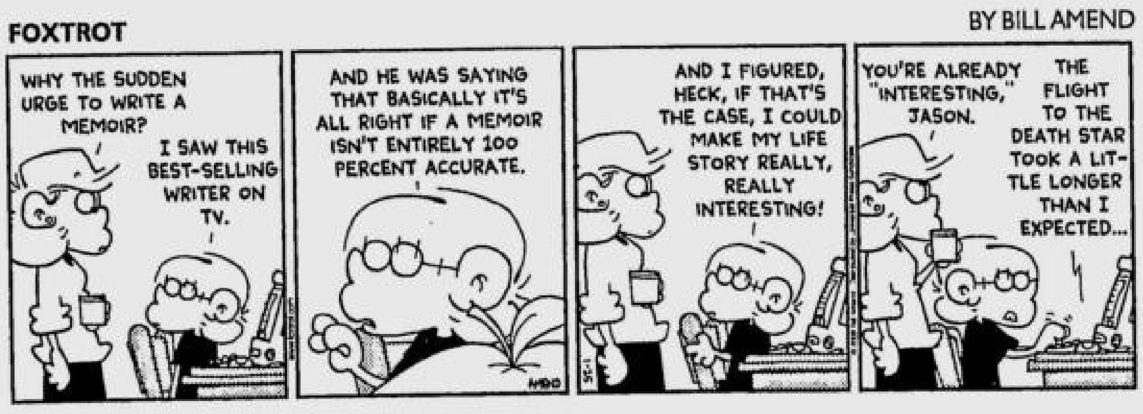
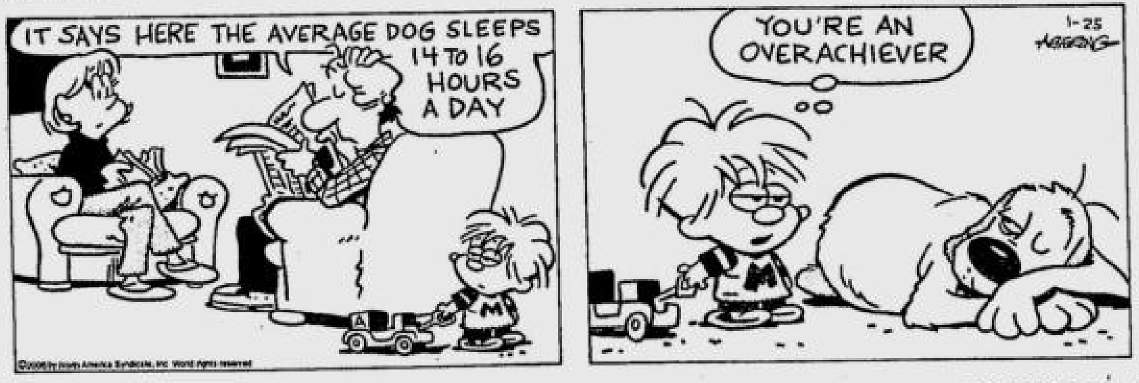
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


WHY THE SUDDEN URGE TO WRITE A MEMOIR?
I SAW THIS BEST-SELLING WRITER ON TV.
AND HE WAS SAYING THAT BASICALLY IT'S ALL RIGHT IF A MEMOIR ISN'T ENTIRELY 100 PERCENT ACCURATE.
AND I FIGURED, HECK, IF THAT'S THE CASE, I COULD MAKE MY LIFE STORY REALLY, REALLY INTERESTING!
YOU'RE ALREADY "INTERESTING," JASON.
THE FLIGHT TO THE DEATH STAR TOOK A LITTLE LONGER THAN I EXPECTED...

MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


IT SAYS HERE THE AVERAGE DOG SLEEPS 14 TO 16 HOURS A DAY
YOU'RE AN OVERACHIEVER
1-25
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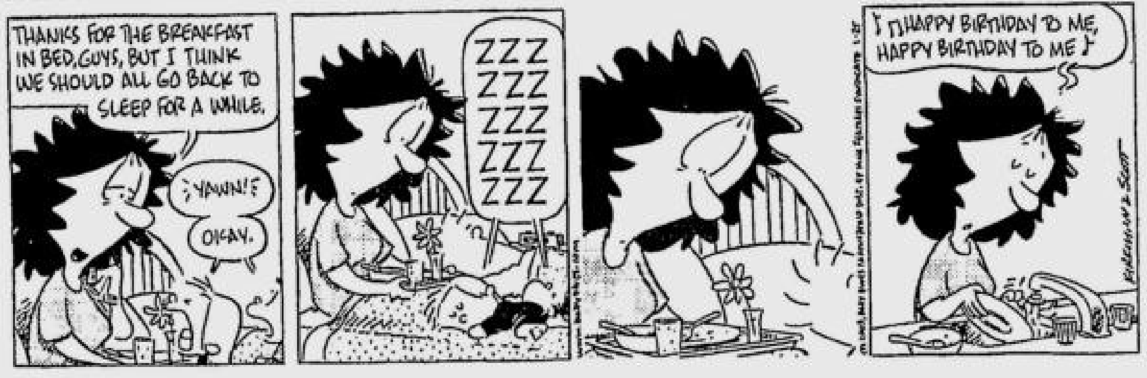
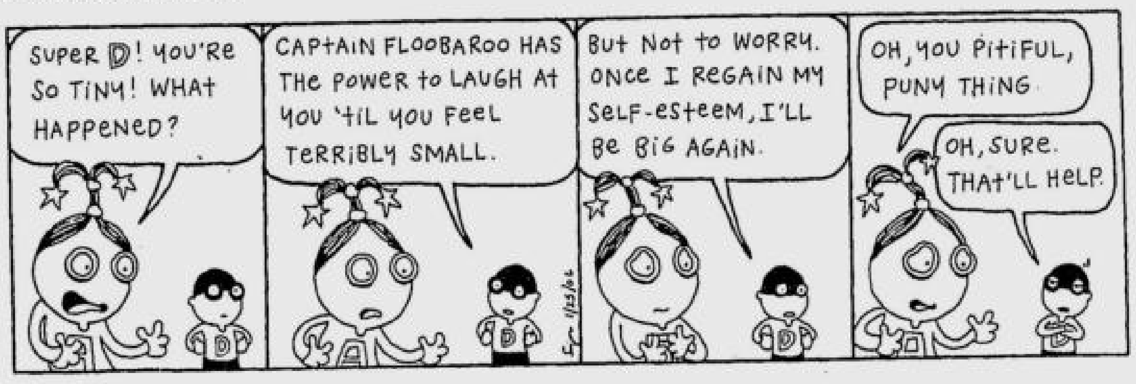
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


THANKS FOR THE BREAKFAST IN BED, GUYS, BUT I THINK WE SHOULD ALL GO BACK TO SLEEP FOR A WHILE.
¡YAWN!¡
OKAY.
ZZZ ZZZ ZZZ ZZZ ZZZ
♪ HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ME, HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ME ♪

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


SUPER D! YOU'RE SO TINY! WHAT HAPPENED?
CAPTAIN FLOOBAROO HAS THE POWER TO LAUGH AT YOU 'TIL YOU FEEL TERRIBLY SMALL.
BUT NOT TO WORRY. ONCE I REGAIN MY SELF-ESTEEM, I'LL BE BIG AGAIN.
OH, YOU PITIFUL, PUNY THING
OH, SURE. THAT'LL HELP.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're a fascinating person. You lead an interesting life because you're interested in many things and many people. (Plus, you're intelligent.) You have high ideals and a finely tuned nervous system. Most of you are unusually talented. In the year ahead, expect increased solitude so that you can learn or study something important.

Birthdate of: Robert Burns, Scottish poet; Corazon Aquino, former Philippine president; Alicia Keys, R&B diva.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You feel a bit restless today. Actually, you feel independent and rebellious! Perhaps someone challenges your beliefs (religious or political). Don't take the bait.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Stay on top of your bank account today. Surprises with other people's money or the resources of others are possible. Take caution against losing money. However, you might also find some!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Partners are a bit feisty today. (You might be too.) This could be because someone catches you off guard about something. Basically, it's a minor thing—let it go.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Computer failures, power outages, lost items and surprise news could affect your workday. You might also learn something unexpected related to your health. Relax—it's minor.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Surprise flirtations will please you today. Parents should be watchful over children because it is a mildly accident-prone day. However, you're full of creative ideas.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Minor surprises at home are likely now. Small appliances or little items could break down or suddenly need repair. Unexpected company might be on your doorstep.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You want to do your own thing today. It might be because you feel independent, or it might be just a restless, nervous impulse. It's OK. Be who you are.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You want to buy something beautiful for your home or for a family member today. (Impulse shopping is irresistible.) What you buy will probably please you.

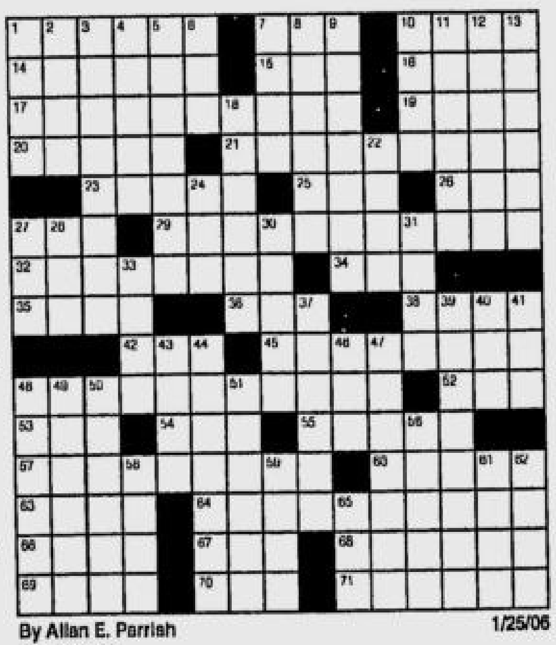
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): The Moon is still in your sign today, giving you a slight edge of good fortune. It makes a gentle aspect to Neptune, which makes you feel tender-hearted to others. (That's nice.) Extend a helping hand if you can.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You can definitely enjoy some solitude in pleasant surroundings today. You need time by yourself to sort things out and pull your act together.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Discussions with friends, perhaps a female friend in particular, are rewarding today. Someone needs to confide in you, and perhaps vice versa as well.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): People see you in very sympathetic terms today. Someone might offer to help you. Alternatively, someone also might ask you for help. If so, you feel willing to act.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Allan E. Parrish
Mentor, OH

1/25/06

ACROSS
1 Traffic tie-ups
7 Doggish comment
10 Eastern nursemaid
14 Not so tough
15 Chou En-__
16 Military post
17 Certain culinary contest
19 Speech therapist's concern
20 Refrigerant gas
21 Lacking interest
23 Make cloth gathers
25 Fairness-in-hiring letters
26 Turkish title
27 New York gridder
29 Embroidery like tapestry
32 Mileage recorder
34 Original
35 Occupied
36 Fairy queen
38 Caesar's question to Brutus
42 Viscous liquid
45 Election slate
48 2003 World Series MVP
52 Classic Jag
53 Actress Hagen
54 ASCAP rival
55 Map feature
57 Shabby
60 1964 A.L. Rookie of the Year
63 Skin opening
64 Boxer born Geraldo Gonzalez
66 Mideast carrier
67 Tennyson's twilight
68 Command
69 "Ed Wood" star
70 FICA-funder
71 Pastry shells

DOWN
1 Lowly worker
2 Neet rival
3 Brake-lining material
4 Big name in copiers
5 Like Simba
6 No-seats-available letters
7 Cockeyed
8 Palmeiro of baseball
9 XV
10 Up to it
11 Fruity cocktail
12 Select for duty
13 Cool dude
18 __ Abdul-Jabbar
22 Aspire
24 Part of IRA
27 Specific task
28 End of some URLs
30 Quaffed
31 Writer Wister
33 Legendary tale
37 Big plane name
39 Woven fabrics
40 Shatner novel "__ War"
41 Application
43 French cleric
44 Creates again
46 Atlas abbr.
47 1964 Roy Orbison hit
48 Moved upward
49 "Lawrence of Arabia" star
50 Subordinate bureaucrat
51 Urban centers
56 Benefactor Yale
58 Lend a hand
59 Writer Ferber
61 Enormous
62 Picnic invaders
65 Opening letters

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

I	S	L	E	T	■	H	O	S	P	■	P	I	P	E
N	O	I	R	E	■	Y	A	W	S	■	E	R	I	E
M	A	K	E	A	W	A	K	E	U	P	C	A	L	L
A	P	E	■	K	A	T	I	E	■	O	A	S	E	S
N	Y	S	E	■	S	T	E	T	S	O	N	■	■	■
■	■	■	S	E	I	S	■	P	E	R	■	C	P	A
C	O	O	P	T	■	■	M	E	E	I	T	H	E	R
P	L	A	Y	H	I	D	E	A	N	D	S	E	E	K
L	E	S	S	E	N	E	D	■	■	E	A	R	N	S
S	O	T	■	R	O	C	■	A	G	A	R	■	■	■
■	■	■	A	N	N	E	T	T	E	■	S	T	E	T
A	D	A	G	E	■	D	E	L	O	S	■	O	A	R
B	E	O	N	T	H	E	S	A	M	E	P	A	G	E
B	A	K	E	■	A	N	T	S	■	A	I	S	L	E
A	N	I	S	■	S	T	A	T	■	M	E	T	E	D

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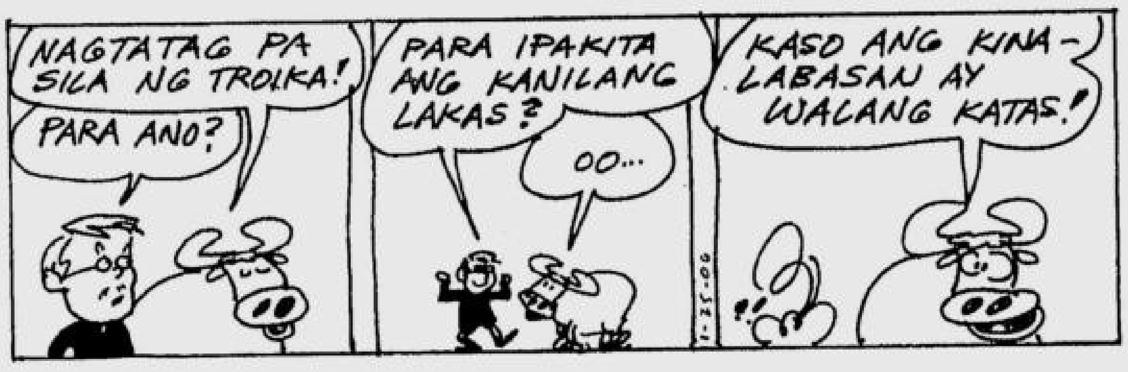
1/26/06

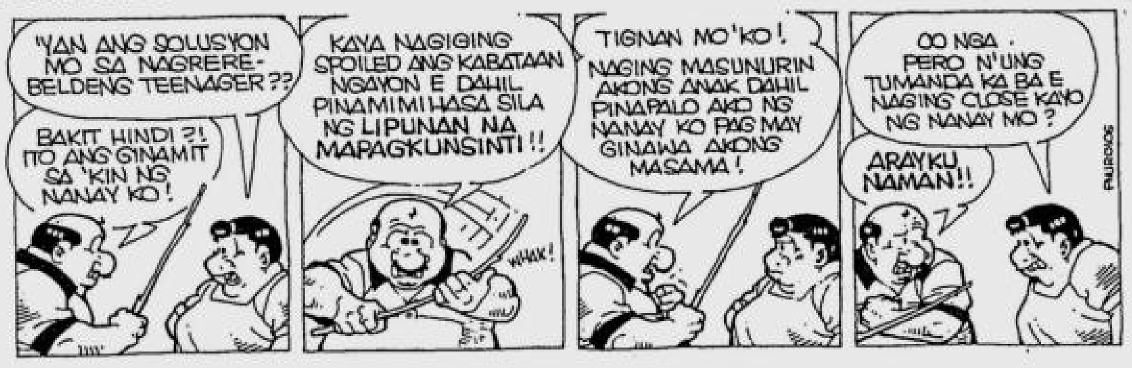
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


NAGTATAG PA SILA NG TROIKA!
PARA ANO?
PARA IPAKITA ANG KANILANG LAKAS?
OO...
KASO ANG KINALABASAN AY WALANG KATAS!
1-25-06

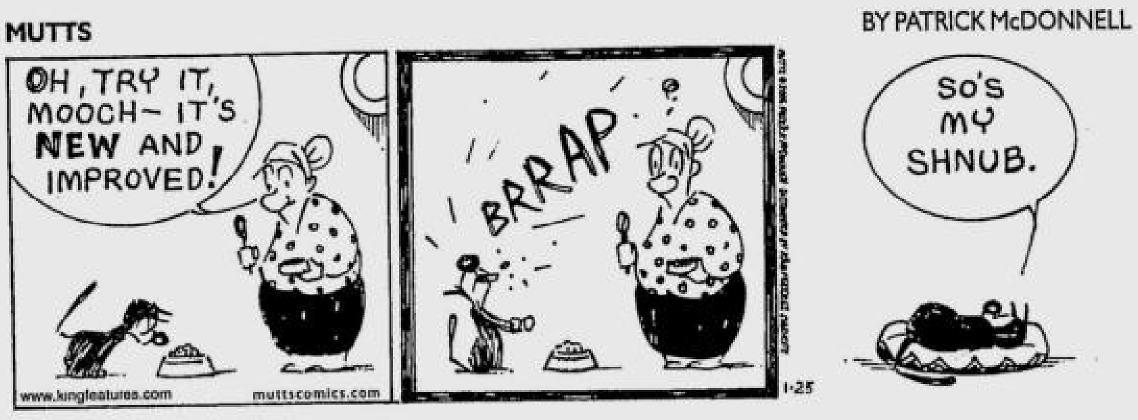
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


'YAN ANG SOLUSYON MO SA NAGREREBELDENG TEENAGER??
BAKIT HINDI ?! ITO ANG GINAMIT SA 'KIN NG NANAY KO!
KAYA NAGIGING SPOILED ANG KABATAAN NGAYON E DAHIL PINAMIMIHASA SILA NG LIPUNAN NA MAPAGKUNSINTI!!
WHAK!
TIGNAN MO'KO! NAGING MASUNURIN AKONG ANAK DAHIL PINAPALO AKO NG NANAY KO PAG MAY GINAWA AKONG MASAMA!
OO NGA. PERO N'UNG TUMANDA KA BA E NAGING CLOSE KAYO NG NANAY MO?
ARAYKU NAMAN!!

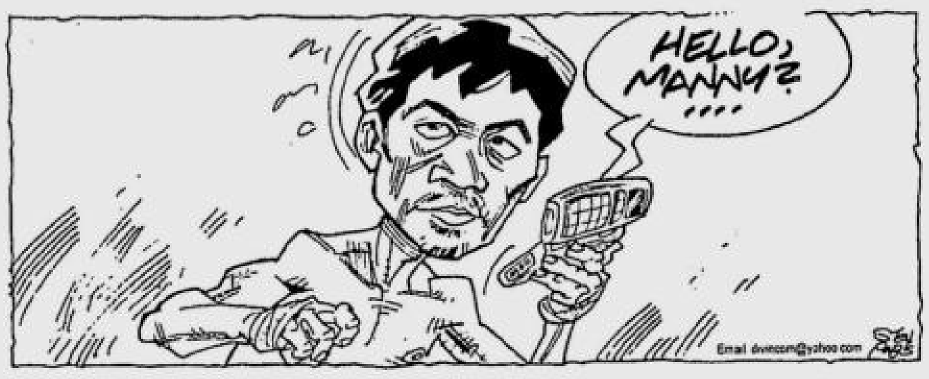
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


OH, TRY IT, MOOCH– IT'S NEW AND IMPROVED!
BRRAP
SO'S MY SHNUB.
1-25
www.kingfeatures.com
muttscomics.com

DIVINE COMEDY

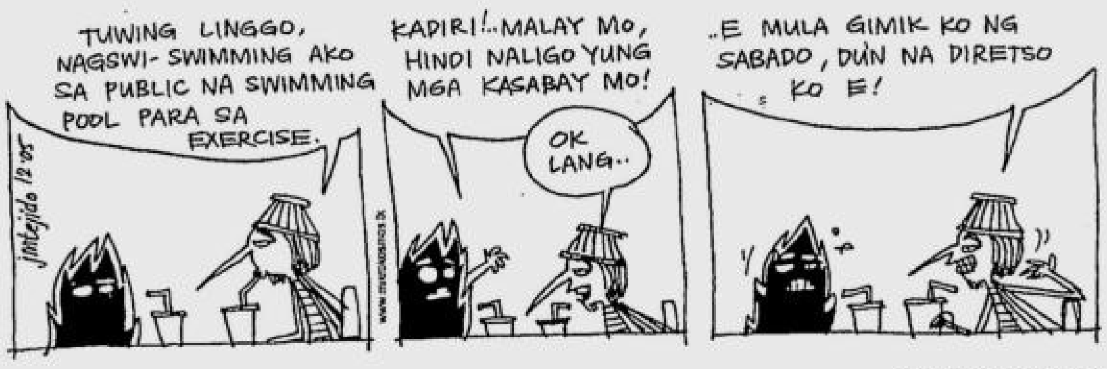
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


HELLO, MANNY?
Email divincom@yahoo.com

PAGKATAPOS NG LABAN NI PACQUIAO, TUMAWAG SA KANYA ANG PRESIDENTE PARA SYA AY I-CONGRATULATE

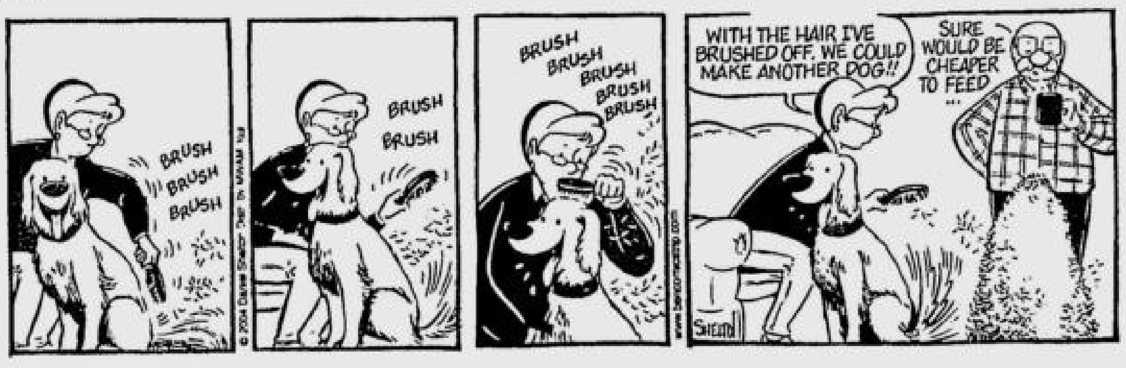
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


TUWING LINGGO, NAGSWI-SWIMMING AKO SA PUBLIC NA SWIMMING POOL PARA SA EXERCISE.
KADIRI!..MALAY MO, HINDI NALIGO YUNG MGA KASABAY MO!
OK LANG..
..E MULA GIMIK KO NG SABADO, DUN NA DIRETSO KO E!
jmtejido 12'05

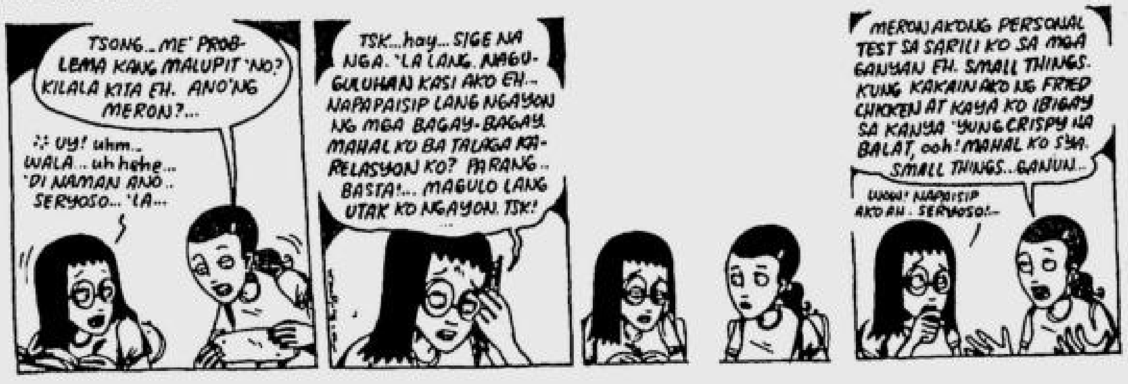
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


BRUSH BRUSH BRUSH
BRUSH BRUSH
BRUSH BRUSH BRUSH BRUSH BRUSH
WITH THE HAIR I'VE BRUSHED OFF, WE COULD MAKE ANOTHER DOG!!
SURE WOULD BE CHEAPER TO FEED ...

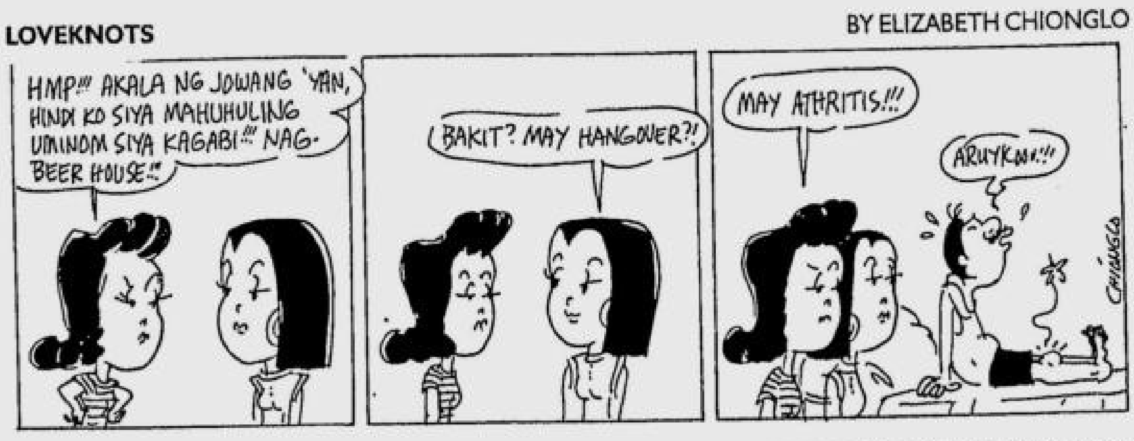
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


TSONG.. ME' PROBLEMA KANG MALUPIT 'NO? KILALA KITA EH. ANO'NG MERON?...
UY! uhm.. WALA... uh hehe... 'DI NAMAN ANO.. SERYOSO... 'LA...
TSK...hay... SIGE NA NGA. 'LA LANG. NAGUGULUHAN KASI AKO EH.. NAPAPAISIP LANG NGAYON NG MGA BAGAY-BAGAY. MAHAL KO BA TALAGA KARELASYON KO? PARANG.. BASTA!... MAGULO LANG UTAK KO NGAYON. TSK!
MERON AKONG PERSONAL TEST SA SARILI KO SA MGA GANYAN EH. SMALL THINGS. KUNG KAKAIN AKO NG FRIED CHICKEN AT KAYA KO IBIGAY SA KANYA 'YUNG CRISPY NA BALAT, ooh! MAHAL KO S'YA. SMALL THINGS.. GANUN..
WOW! NAPAISIP AKO AH.. SERYOSO!..

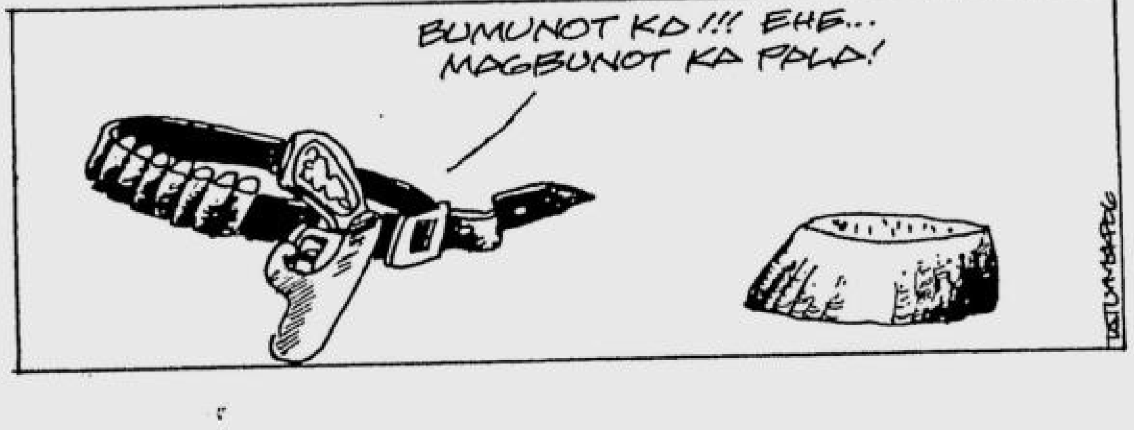
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


HMP!!! AKALA NG JOWANG 'YAN, HINDI KO SIYA MAHUHULING UMINOM SIYA KAGABI!!! NAG-BEER HOUSE!!
BAKIT? MAY HANGOVER?!
MAY ATHRITIS!!!
ARUYKK!!!
CHIONGLO

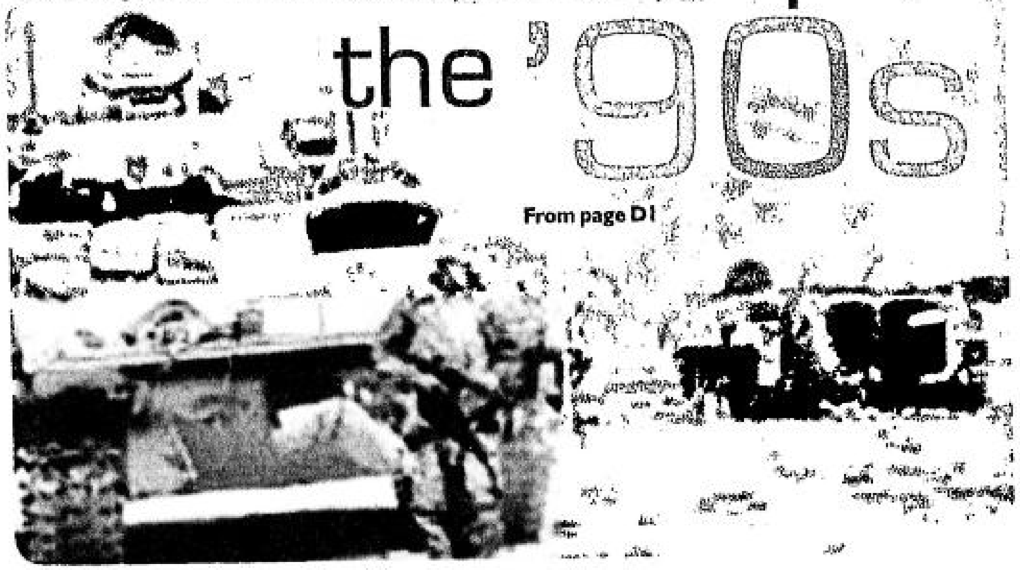
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


BUMUNOT KO!!! EHE... MAGBUNOT KA PALA!

Events that shaped the '90s

From page D1



US army tanks traverse the Iraqi desert.

rechargeable lamps or generator sets to ease the misery.

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. On Aug. 2, 1990, Saddam Hussein sent 700 tanks and 100,000 soldiers to invade Kuwait. Panic buying ensued, and every mother in the country filled up her kitchen cabinet with sardines and cooking oil.

Germany's reunification. East Germany was incorporated into West Germany on Oct. 3, 1990.

The Hubble space telescope. At a cost of US$2.5 billion, the Hubble Space Telescope was launched into orbit on April 24, 1990.

A 7.8 earthquake. The great temblor of July 16, 1990, reduced Baguio City's Hyatt Hotel into a pile of rubble. Cabanatuan City and Dagupan City were similarly devastated. Around 5,000 people died or were injured. Damage to property amounted to P10B.

1991

Iraq's defeat. On Jan. 17, The US-led Operation Desert Storm against Iraq started the year with a bang. Iraq's Scud missiles were no match against American smart bombs and stealth aircraft. After 100 hours of ground fighting, Kuwait was liberated.

Yugoslavia's break-up. Croatia and Slovenia declared their independence from Yugoslavia on June 25, 1991. The Serbs and the Macedonians soon created their own republics. Millions lost their lives or were uprooted from their homes in a phenomenon that became known as "ethnic cleansing."

The Soviet Union's disintegration. After three Baltic states left the Soviet Union, Russia, Ukraine and Belarus signed an accord dissolving the Soviet Union on Dec. 8, 1991. On Dec. 26, the highest governmental body of the Soviet Union dissolved itself. With the US remaining as the only superpower, the Cold War also came to a close.

Mt. Pinatubo's eruption. This volcano had been dormant for 600 years when it began acting up in April 1991. After some minor emissions, it erupted catastrophically on June 15. Central Luzon was devastated by *lahar* and pyroclastic flows in what was touted as the world's largest eruption in over 50 years. Ashfall was recorded in as far away as Cambodia and Malaysia.

THE LIVING saint succumbed to a heart ailment in 1997.

1992

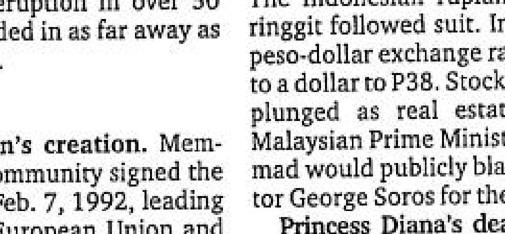
The European Union's creation. Members of the European Community signed the Maaschricht Treaty on Feb. 7, 1992, leading to the creation of the European Union and the euro.

Ramos as president. You might have been too young to vote then, but chances are, you had bugged your parents to vote for Miriam Defensor-Santiago. Regarded as the choice of the youth, Miriam lost by less than a million votes to Fidel Ramos in the May 11 polls. Joseph Estrada was handily elected vice president.

1993

The birth of Pentium. Pentium, Intel's fifth generation microprocessor, was first shipped on March 22, 1993. Originally, it was called 80586 or i586 as a successor to the 486 line, but it was named Pentium so it could be trademarked.

The Lorena Bobbitt incident. Who could forget Lorena Bobbitt? Claiming to be a battered wife, she cut off her husband's penis with a kitchen knife on the night of June 23. She would later be adjudged "not guilty," while her husband became a porn star with his surgically reattached appendage.



THE ERUPTION of Mount Pinatubo lowered world temperature by about 0.5 degrees Celsius.

WWW.PHIVOLCS.DOST.GOV.PH

1994

Miss Universe in the Philippines. Despite criticism from feminists and concerns over the use of government funds, the Philippines spread out the welcome mat for statuesque beauties from all over the world. Miss India Sushmita Sen dazzled the crowd when she declared that motherhood was the essence of being a woman. She got the crown.

MMFF scandal. Months later, a Miss Universe candidate would figure prominently in the Metro Manila Filmfest scandal. Miss Mauritius Viveka Babajee announced Ruffa Gutierrez as Best Actress during the awards night, then handed over to her co-presenter an envelope containing the name of Aiko Melendez, the real winner, saying "Take it, take it." Later, Nanette Medved and Gutierrez announced that Gabby Concepcion was the Best Actor, instead of Edu Manzano.

1995

Pope John Paul II's Manila visit. Despite terrorist threats, the Pope flew to Manila for the World Youth Day ceremonies. He went around town in a bullet-proof glass vehicle, dubbed the Popemobile. His closing Mass on Jan. 15 drew five million people, considered until now as the largest papal gathering in the history of Roman Catholicism.

1996

APEC leaders' summit. On Nov. 22 and 23, heads of 18 nations around the Pacific gathered in Manila for the 8th Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Ministerial Meeting. Opulent villas were constructed in Subic for the brief stay of these presidents and prime ministers. Later, President Clinton and President Ramos, along with all the other heads of State, donned barong Tagalogs for the ceremonial picture-taking.

1997

Dolly, the cloned sheep. Dolly could have been just any other ewe, except that she was the first mammal to have been successfully cloned from an adult cell. Her birth was announced on Feb. 22, 1997.

Hong Kong handover to China. At the stroke of midnight on July 1, the last British governor left the Crown Colony, ending 156 years of British rule, and left Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China. China promised to abide by a "One Country, Two Systems" policy until 2047.

Pathfinder's Mars landing. A tiny remote-controlled rover landed on Mars on July 4. Considered a low-cost spacecraft, it beamed back information on the atmosphere, climate and geology of the Red Planet.

The Asian financial crisis. The value of Thailand's baht dropped dangerously in July. The Indonesian rupiah and the Malaysian ringgit followed suit. In the Philippines, the peso-dollar exchange rate soon fell from P26 to a dollar to P38. Stock markets all over Asia plunged as real estate prices nosedived. Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad would publicly blame currency speculator George Soros for the crisis.

Princess Diana's death. Her story had all the makings of a fairy tale. Married to Prince Charles in a lavish ceremony televised worldwide, Princess Diana was noted equally for her charity work and for her scandal-plagued marriage. Often called the most photographed person in the world, she met her untimely demise in Paris, France, on Aug. 31.

Mother Teresa's passing. Just a few days after Princess Diana's death, Mother Teresa died at age 87. An Indian Catholic nun of Albanian origin, she garnered the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, and was often called the Living Saint for her work among the poor.

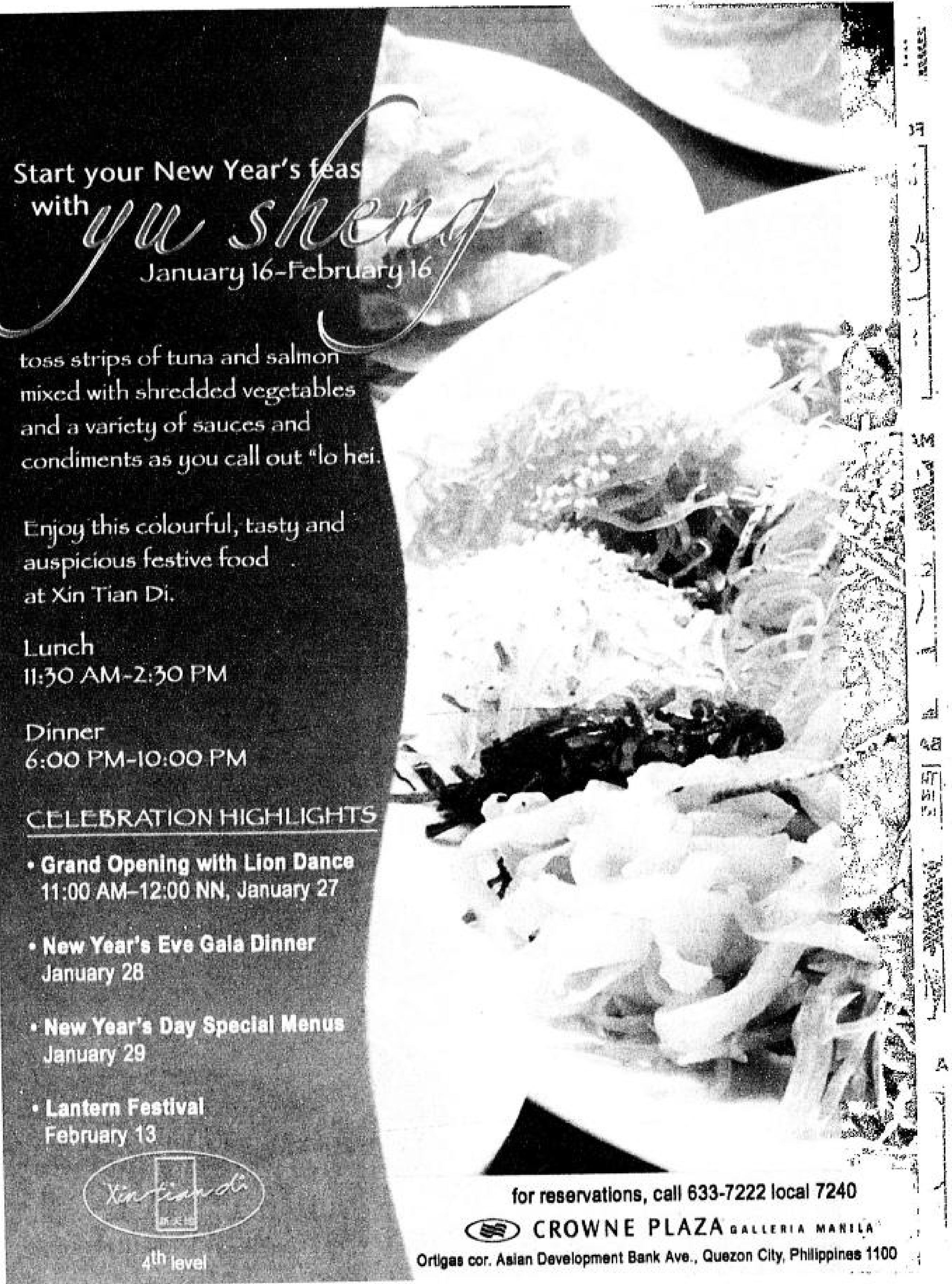
1998

Erap's presidency. On May 11, Joseph Estrada became the 13th President of the Philippines, beating out rival José de Venecia by six million votes. On his inauguration, he vowed, "*Walang kamag-anak, walang kumpare, walang kaibigan.*" Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo also took her oath as vice president.

1999

East Timor's bloody struggle. A Portuguese colony for 400 years, East Timor was seized by Indonesia in 1976. On Aug. 30, 1999, 78.5 percent of the population voted to secede from Indonesia. Massacres and riots erupted, and UN peacekeepers were called in to restore order.

Y2K bug panic. Doomsayers predicted that the eve of Jan. 1, 2000, would be the end of the world. For the whole year of 1999, everyone scrambled to make computers Y2K compliant. Fortunately, fears of Armageddon turned out to be unfounded, and the world ushered in the new millennium in relative peace.



Start your New Year's feast
with yu sheng
January 16–February 16

toss strips of tuna and salmon
mixed with shredded vegetables
and a variety of sauces and
condiments as you call out "lo hei.

Enjoy this colourful, tasty and
auspicious festive food
at Xin Tian Di.

Lunch
11:30 AM–2:30 PM

Dinner
6:00 PM–10:00 PM

CELEBRATION HIGHLIGHTS
- **Grand Opening with Lion Dance**
  11:00 AM–12:00 NN, January 27
- **New Year's Eve Gala Dinner**
  January 28
- **New Year's Day Special Menus**
  January 29
- **Lantern Festival**
  February 13

Xin tian di
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Step-by-step skincare that works

Lora Gabol

SINCE I STARTED MY "controversial" Obagi regimen, I've been convinced that step-by-step skincare systems may, in fact, work better to a degree because each product (cleanser, toner, etc.) is designed to work in conjunction with the rest.

The ingredients found in the products within a "set" work in synergy and, therefore, lessen the risk of bad reactions that incompatible ingredients may bring about.

Depending on your own skin concerns, from acne-busting to exfoliating to whitening, the many promising skincare systems available in the market today will definitely do your complexion good. And because they come to suit every budget, you can bet there is one that's perfect for you.

Murad Acne Complex. Don't get startled if your dermatologist prescribes this brand the next time you come whining about our need for an effective anti-acne regimen. Most skincare professionals have this tried-and-tested brand on top of their commercially sold product list.

The potent sulfur-salicylic acid tandem is bound to kill off the major causes of zit attacks, resulting in clearer skin—fast. And because of the controlled amount of medication found in this system, the risk of allergies and side effects is practically nonexistent.

Depending on your own skin concerns, the many promising beauty sets in the market today will definitely do your complexion good

MURAD's Energizing Pomegranate Cleanser

MURAD Acne Complex kit

I especially like the Perfecting Lotion, which I recommend you use even on clear days to prevent new breakouts from forming and to keep skin smooth and free of discoloration.

The Body Shop Vitamin E. If you're more on the dry, flaky side of the skin type spectrum, go for a nourishing (not oily!) system instead of loading up on your mom's rich night creams. The Body Shop's Vitamin E system lends a comfortable softness to skin without causing a grease overload. My favorite from this system is the Gel Toner, which is all I need for a smoother makeup application on days when I don't feel like slapping on moisturizer.

Ponds White Beauty. Skincare classic Ponds once again has consumers lining for its new whitening line, now buffed up with a whitening toner that doesn't leave skin painfully parched and peeling.

Without the use of risky bleaching agents, Ponds promotes whiter and fresher skin with all-natural vitamins and a micro-exfoliating mechanism to rid your complexion of dulling dead cells and debris, but without the ugly, visible peeling.

Murad Energizing Complex. Another all-time fave from Dr. Howard Murad, this pomegranate-based skin system promotes a quicker, more effective cell turnover, thus keeping skin at its freshest and youngest.

The system literally "wakes up" your skin with fruit acids and energizes with enzymes while simultaneously protecting the new cells from damage. It's a multitasking regimen perfect for relatively good skin that needs an extra health boost.

Murad at Essenses, Rustans Makati; The Body Shop at major malls; Ponds at PCX and other health and beauty stores.

E-mail the author at lora_gahol@yahoo.com

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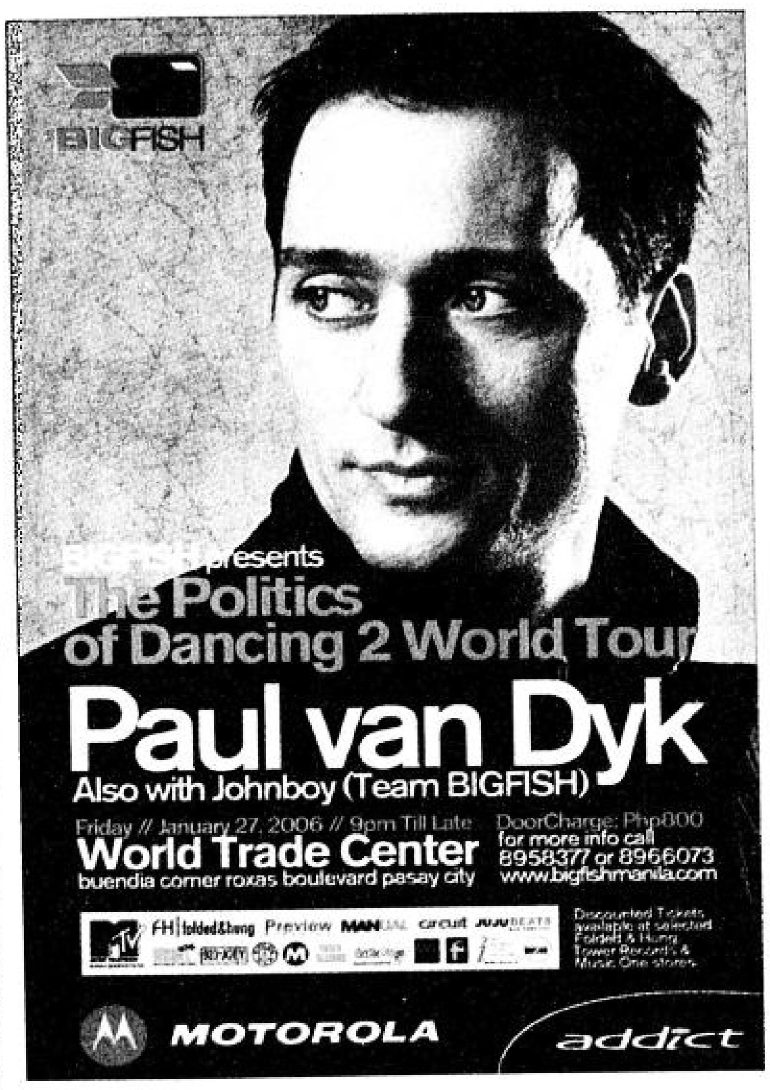

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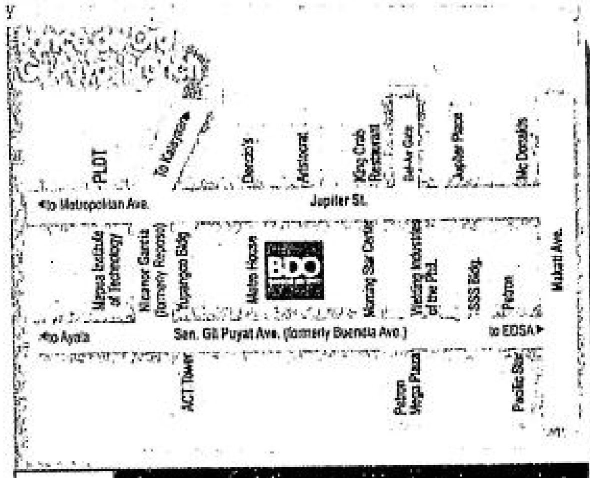
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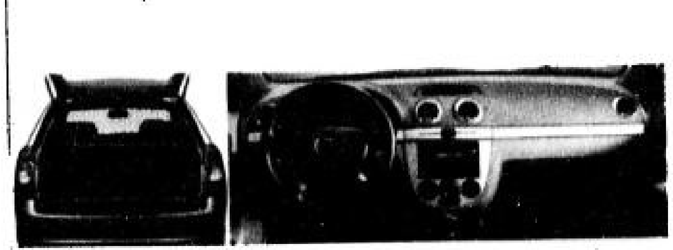

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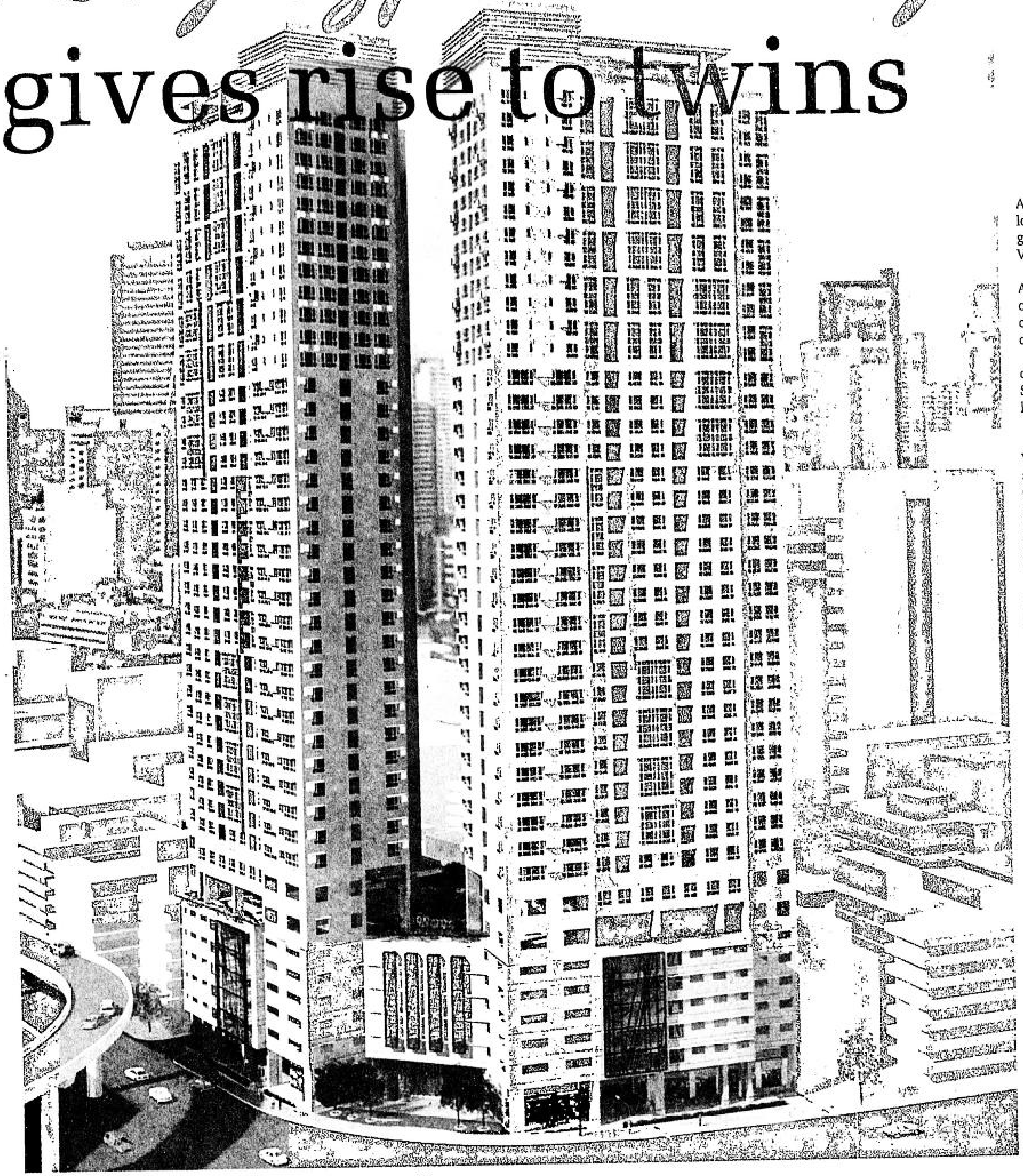
Legazpi Village gives rise to twins



THE COLUMNS
Legazpi Village

AYALA AVENUE'S REAL ESTATE PHENOMENON THAT logged many firsts in the industry is back, this time at another great location - the social and creative hub of Makati, Legazpi Village.

A reincarnation of the wildly successful The Columns Ayala Avenue, The Columns Legazpi Village offers those who missed out on the experience of owning a home at the first Columns a chance to acquire a unit at Legazpi Village's newest high-rise development.

The stately 41-storey two-tower residential structure at the corner of Arnaiz Avenue (formerly Pasay Road) and Amorsolo Street offers close to 800 fresh new residential units in a highly strategic location.

Beyond the prestige, it's the lifestyle

More than just a prestigious address, The Columns Legazpi Village will be built around the young urban achiever archetype: highly driven and hardworking yet socially active. Community Innovations, Ayala Land's fully-owned subsidiary and the moving spirit behind The Columns project decided that an accessibly priced dwelling, that allows the young and dynamic Makati set to live in close proximity to the workplace and to places of leisure, is the key to attracting this market.

While it's still within walking distance to the dynamic and corporate districts, The Columns Legazpi Village is nestled in the midst of the area's best boutiques, hip bars, cosmopolitan restaurants, quaint shops, parks, a church, a dance studio, and a university, giving young Makati professionals eclectic options for after-work or weekend exploits.

Fresh new cuts

Aside from the regular flats and studios, The Columns Legazpi Village also boasts loft-style and bi-level units that Community Innovations sees as the ideal dwelling choice for the young and dynamic Makati urbanite. Lofts and bi-levels offer flexible space, which can be defined in a lot of ways. The high ceilings and large windows let in a good dose of natural light and offer a great view of the city; and the concrete, steel and glass complement each other to create an aura of sophistication and ultramodern living.

Singles or young couples can take their pick from studios or 1-bedroom loft. Young families would fit in nicely into spacious 2-bedroom units ranging from the single level 2-bedroom unit to a 2-bedroom loft/bi-level unit.

Vertical village

A stately two-tower structure bearing the trademark aluminum renditions of bamboo artwork on its façade, The Columns Legazpi Village is envisioned to be a high-rise village. Apart from city club-like amenities, it will also have an open plaza and clusters of shops, restaurants and cafes with al fresco dining at the ground floor.

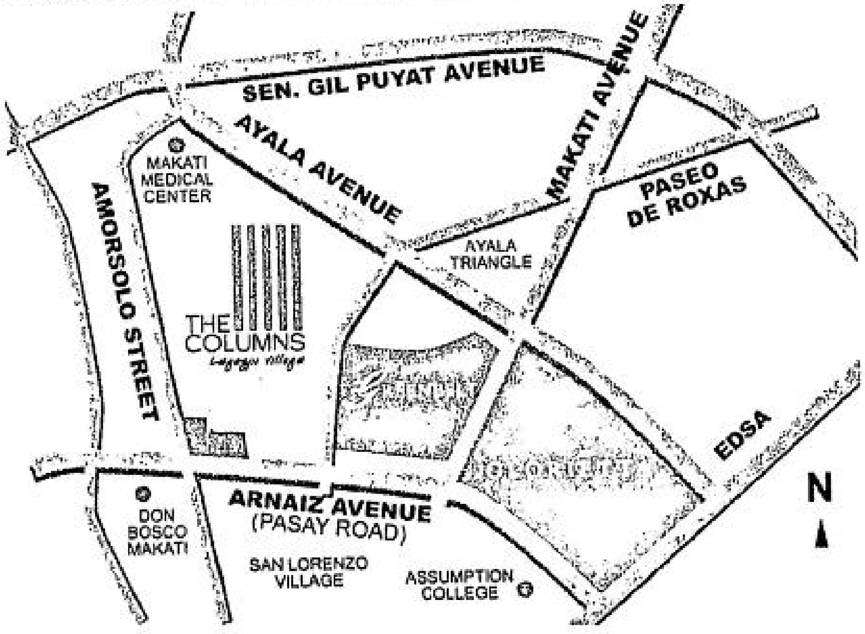
While Makati streets are constantly in flux, inside The Columns residents are in their own private heaven. Entering the Grand Lobby, one will be struck by the Zen-inspired interior design concept that makes use of open lounge areas with natural ventilation.

Stretching across the two towers on the 7th floor is the 2,700-square meter Recreational Club, which will provide residents a place to socialize and relax. The area will feature the "Fitness Hub," a 450-square meter center, which is more than twice the size of typical fitness centers of urban condominiums, divided into "wet" and "dry" floors. The sauna and massage parlors will comprise the former, while the exercise and aerobics area will make up the latter.

The Recreational Club will also have a kiddie pool and a day care center manned by efficient childcare experts, making The Columns a kid-friendly investment. Adjacent to the kiddie pool is the luxurious 25-meter lap pool for adults. There will also be indoor and outdoor play areas, function and guest rooms, a jogging trail and a sun deck.

With the residents' safety and convenience as its primary concern, Community Innovations made sure that the two structures have passed the same rigorous quality control system that has become the trademark of all their projects. The Columns' enhanced security features as well as energy saving design are industry firsts.

The new Columns redefine the concept of living within ones means. Whether it's a 1-bedroom flat or a bi-level unit, these private areas offer a place to party, relax or work out - with great, unobstructed city views.



For inquiries, call 888-0000, email cii-sales@ayalaland.com.ph or visit www.communityinnovations.com.ph. Model units are available for viewing daily at the 3rd level of Glorietta 3, Ayala Center, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. (Sunday to Thursday), 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. (Friday and Saturday).

Community Innovations is an Ayala Land company that caters to young urban achievers. It builds balanced, harmonious communities with a sense of fun, where the living experience enhances the lifestyles and fulfills the aspirations of its customers.

Community Innovations launches The Columns Legazpi Village

COMMUNITY INNOVATIONS newest project, The Columns Legazpi Village, will have its grand public debut at 5 p.m. today amidst good music and flowing cocktails at Glorietta Activity Center in Makati.

Dubbed "Style 'n Everything," the event is a celebration of what it's like to live within reach of everything that makes life exciting and pleasurable. Located in the heart of the social and creative hub that is Makati, The Columns provides residents a place to socialize, stay fit and relax.

A lively number by Bo Razon and bossa dancers kicks off the celebration as hosts Vince Hizon and wife Patricia Bermudez formally welcome the crowd.

Community Innovations president Bobby Dy then takes the podium and talks about the project and the driving force behind the venture. The Columns' features will be shown via a giant screen in a fast-cut montage, highlighting its accessibility to the Makati CBD as well as the diverse recreational centers and various places of interests like Greenbelt, Legazpi Park, coffee shops, Italian restaurants and other weekend haunts tucked away around the village.

The public may also view the model units designed by renowned interior designers at the 3rd level of Glorietta 3.

The event ends with guests, prospective buyers and investors, as well as people who made the project possible: interior designers, suppliers, contractors, and Community Innovations and Ayala Land executives giving a toast to The Columns Legazpi Village.

Located in the heart of the social and creative hub that is Makati, The Columns provides residents a place to socialize, stay fit and relax

Can you afford to live among the skycrapers?

2-BEDROOM Bi-level: Master Bedroom

2-BEDROOM Bi-level: Living Area

1-BEDROOM Loft: Master Bedroom

1-BEDROOM Loft: Living and Dining Areas

2-BEDROOM Flat: Kid's Room

STUDIO Unit

Designed to make the dream of owning a posh home at The Columns accessible to young urban achievers and families, the payment schemes can be customized to suit the needs and capacities of buyers

The ease of city living is a lure that has triggered the proliferation of high-rise condominiums in the Makati central business district and villages just off the metro's borders. The prohibitive rental rates (and scarcity of decent options) of living spaces within a five-mile radius of any CBD, however, are driving many of the city's young executives to the outskirts of Manila in search of lower rates at the expense of the luxury and comfort they seek. For young urbanites, the option to go home to opulent interiors and access lavish amenities yet still be close enough to feel the pulse of the city is a rare opportunity-until now.

The Columns Legazpi Village is a breath of fresh air for young Makati professionals who have long yearned to live in chic yet accessibly priced living spaces. Time has come for you to give urban Makati living a shot.

The 41-storey two-tower structure at the corner of Arnaiz Avenue (formerly Pasay Road) and Amorsolo Street is walking distance to about 240 office buildings within the CBD, but also to the best party venues in the area like Greenbelt and a host of other hip after-six hangouts. Residents will also have easy access to schools, parks, churches, hospitals, embassies and many more.

With its ample recreational and city club-like amenities such as the 450 sq.m. 'Fitness Hub', Zen-like ambience, well-planned units as well as lofts and bi-levels, this high-rise 'village' defies the urban condominium stereotype of cramped spaces.

The two-tower development combines excellent location, superior amenities and highly attractive payment packages, with monthly payments for as low as P10,000 a month. Designed to make the dream of owning a posh home at The Columns accessible to young urban achievers and families, the payment schemes can be customized to suit the needs and capacities of buyers.

What makes this residential project an even better investment is that it has prime developer Ayala Land at the helm through its wholly-owned subsidiary Community Innovations.

At The Columns Legazpi Village, one can have a fabulous dwelling among the skyscrapers without straining the budget.

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THE COLUMNS
Legazpi Village

The Columns will house a 'Fitness Hub' that will offer a combination of gym, aerobics and spa services. Previously unheard of in a condominium development, the sauna, steam rooms and massage facilities take the concept of urban fitness to a different, unexplored level

FLAT TUMMIES, FLEXED BICEPS, TRIM THIGHS and well toned abs. Who doesn't dream of having all these? More than bolstering one's aesthetic appeal, studies show that fitness programs can boost work productivity and reduce absenteeism as well.

The desire to have a to-die-for body has spawned one too many health clubs all over the metropolis. Signing up for a membership, however, could cost you to lose not just poundage but sleep as well. The prospect of having to shell out P40,000 a year or more on workout regimen plus personal trainer's fees (having one can bloat your bill faster than salty and carbonated food can bloat your stomach) is enough to make would-be gym members more tolerant of their bodies - fats and all. Also, the thought of working 8 or more hours a day and then traveling another hour to the gym and squeezing ones butt in the door just before closing time can make people want to quit even before they can start.

Truth is, keeping fit doesn't have to be an additional financial burden or cost another hour or two on the road.

Picture this: Zero membership fee plus free access to a state-of-the-art professional gym in Makati. Punch out your time card in the office at 6 p.m. and be in the gym 15 to 30 minutes later. Treat your aching joints to a soothing massage at the spa, or maybe take a 30-minute dip in a pool to loosen up your tired muscles, then go grab something to eat or take the elevator and head straight to your unit several floors above to catch on some Zzzzz.

These images must have fired the brainpower of Community Innovations' executives to lay the groundwork for what is to be The Columns Legazpi Village. Geared towards capturing the young and dynamic yet stress-prone Makati set, The Columns Legazpi Village anchors its blueprints on promoting not just chic living within ones means, but more importantly, on a culture of fitness.

A 41-storey two-tower beauty right at the corner of Amorsolo Street and Arnaiz Avenue (formerly Pasay Road), The Columns will house a 'Fitness Hub' that will offer a combination of gym, aerobics and spa services. Previously unheard of in a condominium development, the sauna, steam rooms and massage facilities take the concept of urban fitness to a different, unexplored level. What's more, the amount you pay yearly to a regular health club is enough to cover a reservation fee for a unit at The Columns.

This 450-square meter 'Fitness Hub' is more than twice the size of gyms in typical residential developments. The Recreational Club will also be comprised of a 25-meter lap swimming pool, sun deck, kiddie pool, indoor and outdoor play areas, jogging area, function and guest rooms, and a day care center.

Considered the more outgoing and artistic side of Makati, Legazpi Village provides the perfect backdrop for this two-tower wonder. An eclectic mix of boutiques, bars, restaurants, and quaint shops, Legazpi Village is pulsing with culture, energy and cosmopolitanism that evoke the bohemian feel of downtown New York and Parisian living.

Being in the heart of an essentially infinite social and creative universe all its own that is Legazpi Village, and being just walking distance from the dynamic and corporate districts of Makati, The Columns enjoys the best of both worlds.

Squeezing some crunch time into your busy schedules has never been this worry-free. At The Columns Legazpi Village, having the body of your dreams is, literally, within just a few steps.

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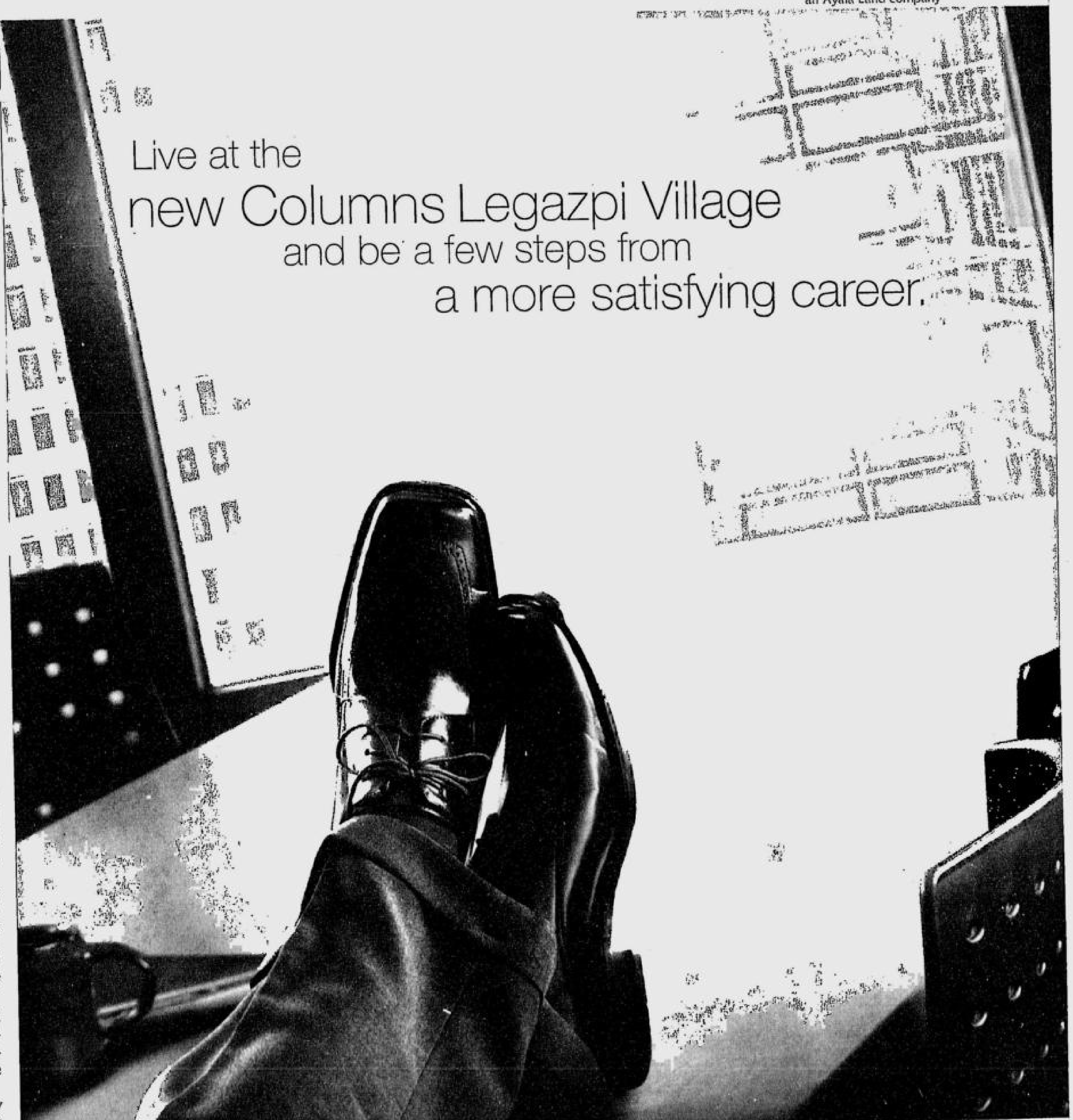

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